

The
COMPLETE POEMS
of
PAUL LAURENCE
DUNBAR

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THE COMPLETE POEMS
OF
PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

WITH THE INTRODUCTION TO
"LYRICS OF LOWLY LIFE"

BY
W. D. HOWELLS

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DEDICATIONS

LYRICS OF LOWLY LIFE

TO

MY MOTHER

• • •

LYRICS OF THE HEARTH-SIDE

TO

ALICE

• • •

LYRICS OF LOVE AND LAUGHTER

TO

MISS CATHERINE IMPEY

• • •


LYRICS OF SUNSHINE AND SHADOW

TO

MRS. FRANK CONOVER

WITH THANKS FOR HER LONG BELIEF

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INTRODUCTION TO LYRICS OF LOWLY LIFE

I THINK I should scarcely trouble the reader with a special appeal in behalf of this book, if it had not specially appealed to me for reasons apart from the author's race, origin, and condition. The world is too old now, and I find myself too much of its mood, to care for the work of a poet because he is black, because his father and mother were slaves, because he was, before and after he began to write poems, an elevator-boy. These facts would certainly attract me to him as a man, if I knew him to have a literary ambition, but when it came to his literary art, I must judge it irrespective of these facts, and enjoy or endure it for what it was in itself.

It seems to me that this was my experience with the poetry of Paul Laurence Dunbar when I found it in another form, and in justice to him I cannot wish that it should be otherwise with his readers here. Still, it will legitimately interest those who like to know the causes, or, if these may not be known, the sources, of things, to learn that the father and mother of the first poet of his race in our language were negroes without admixture of white

blood. The father escaped from slavery in Kentucky to freedom in Canada, while there was still no hope of freedom otherwise; but the mother was freed by the events of the civil war, and came North to Ohio, where their son was born at Dayton, and grew up with such chances and mischances for mental training as everywhere befall the children of the poor. He has told me that his father picked up the trade of a plasterer, and when he had taught himself to read, loved chiefly to read history. The boy's mother shared his passion for literature, with a special love of poetry, and after the father died she struggled on in more than the poverty she had shared with him. She could value the faculty which her son showed first in prose sketches and attempts at fiction, and she was proud of the praise and kindness they won him among the people of the town, where he has never been without the warmest and kindest friends.

In fact from every part of Ohio and from several cities of the adjoining States, there came letters in cordial appreciation of the critical recognition which it was my

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pleasure no less than my duty to offer Paul Dunbar's work in another place. It seemed to me a happy omen for him that so many people who had known him, or known of him, were glad of a stranger's good word; and it was gratifying to see that at home he was esteemed for the things he had done rather than because as the son of negro slaves he had done them. If a prophet is often without honor in his own country, it surely is nothing against him when he has it. In this case it deprived me of the glory of a discoverer; but that is sometimes a barren joy, and I am always willing to forego it.

What struck me in reading Mr. Dunbar's poetry was what had already struck his friends in Ohio and Indiana, in Kentucky and Illinois. They had felt, as I felt, that however gifted his race had proven itself in music, in oratory, in several of the other arts, here was the first instance of an American negro who had evinced innate distinction in literature. In my criticism of his book I had alleged Dumas in France, and I had forgetfully failed to allege the far greater Pushkin in Russia; but these were both mulattoes, who might have been supposed to derive their qualities from white blood

vastly more artistic than ours, and who were the creatures of an environment more favorable to their literary development. So far as I could remember, Paul Dunbar was the only man of pure African blood and of American civilization to feel the negro life æsthetically and express it lyrically. It seemed to me that this had come to its most modern consciousness in him, and that his brilliant and unique achievement was to have studied the American negro objectively, and to have represented him as he found him to be, with humor, with sympathy, and yet with what the reader must instinctively feel to be entire truthfulness. I said that a race which had come to this effect in any member of it, had attained civilization in him, and I permitted myself the imaginative prophecy that the hostilities and the prejudices which had so long constrained his race were destined to vanish in the arts; that these were to be the final proof that God had made of one blood all nations of men. I thought his merits positive and not comparative; and I held that if his black poems had been written by a white man, I should not have found them less admirable. I accepted them as an evidence of the essential unity of the human race, which does not

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think or feel black in one and white in another, but humanly in all.

Yet it appeared to me then, and it appears to me now, that there is a precious difference of temperament between the races which it would be a great pity ever to lose, and that this is best preserved and most charmingly suggested by Mr. Dunbar in those pieces of his where he studies the moods and traits of his race in its own accent of our English. We call such pieces dialect pieces for want of some closer phrase, but they are really not dialect so much as delightful personal attempts and failures for the written and spoken language. In nothing is his essentially refined and delicate art so well shown as in these pieces, which, as I ventured to say, described the range between appetite and emotion, with certain lifts far beyond and above it, which is the range of the race. He reveals in these a finely ironical perception of the negro's limitations, with a tenderness for them which I think so very rare as to be almost quite new. I should say, perhaps, that it was this humorous quality which Mr. Dunbar had added to our literature, and it would be this which would most distinguish him, now and hereafter. It is something that one

feels in nearly all the dialect pieces; and I hope that in the present collection he has kept all of these in his earlier volume, and added others to them. But the contents of this book are wholly of his own choosing, and I do not know how much or little he may have preferred the poems in literary English. Some of these I thought very good, and even more than very good, but not distinctively his contribution to the body of American poetry. What I mean is that several people might have written them; but I do not know any one else at present who could quite have written the dialect pieces. These are divinations and reports of what passes in the hearts and minds of a lowly people whose poetry had hitherto been inarticulately expressed in music, but now finds, for the first time in our tongue, literary interpretation of a very artistic completeness.

I say the event is interesting, but how important it shall be can be determined only by Mr. Dunbar's future performance. I cannot undertake to prophesy concerning this; but if he should do nothing more than he has done, I should feel that he had made the strongest claim for the negro in English literature that the negro has yet made. He has at least

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produced something that, however we may critically disagree about it, we cannot well refuse to enjoy; in more than one piece he has produced a work of art.

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LYRICS OF LOWLY LIFE



ERE SLEEP COMES DOWN
TO SOOTHE THE
WEARY EYES

ERE sleep comes down to soothe
the weary eyes,

Which all the day with cease-
less care have sought

The magic gold which from the
seeker flies;

Ere dreams put on the gown
and cap of thought,

And make the waking world a
world of lies,—

Of lies most palpable, uncouth,
forlorn,

That say life's full of aches and
tears and sighs,—

Oh, how with more than dreams
the soul is torn,

Ere sleep comes down to soothe the
weary eyes.

Ere sleep comes down to soothe the
weary eyes,

How all the griefs and heart-
aches we have known

Come up like pois'nous vapors that
arise

From some base witch's caldron,
when the crone,

To work some potent spell, her
magic plies.

The past which held its share of
bitter pain,

Whose ghost we prayed that Time
might exorcise,

Comes up, is lived and suffered
o'er again,

Ere sleep comes down to soothe the
weary eyes.

Ere sleep comes down to soothe the
weary eyes,

What phantoms fill the dimly
lighted room;

What ghostly shades in awe-creat-
ing guise

'Are bodied forth within the
teeming gloom.

What echoes faint of sad and soul-
sick cries,

And pangs of vague inexplicable
pain

That pay the spirit's ceaseless en-
terprise,

Come thronging through the
chambers of the brain,

Ere sleep comes down to soothe the
weary eyes.

Ere sleep comes down to soothe the
weary eyes,

Where ranges forth the spirit
far and free?

Through what strange realms and
unfamiliar skies

Tends her far course to lands of
mystery?

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

To lands unspeakable — beyond
 surmise,
Where shapes unknowable to
 being spring,
Till, faint of wing, the Fancy fails
 and dies
Much wearied with the spirit's
 journeying,
Ere sleep comes down to soothe the
 weary eyes.

Ere sleep comes down to soothe the
 weary eyes,
How questioneth the soul that
 other soul,—
The inner sense which neither
 cheats nor lies,
But self exposes unto self, a
 scroll
Full writ with all life's acts un-
 wise or wise,
In characters indelible and
 known;
So, trembling with the shock of
 sad surprise,
The soul doth view its awful
 self alone,
Ere sleep comes down to soothe
 the weary eyes.

When sleep comes down to seal the
 weary eyes,
The last dear sleep whose soft
 embrace is balm,
And whom sad sorrow teaches us
 to prize
For kissing all our passions into
 calm,

Ah, then, no more we heed the sad
 world's cries,
Or seek to probe th' eternal mys-
 tery,
Or fret our souls at long-withheld
 replies,
At glooms through which our
 visions cannot see,
When sleep comes down to seal the
 weary eyes.

THE POET AND HIS SONG

A SONG is but a little thing,
And yet what joy it is to sing!
In hours of toil it gives me zest,
And when at eve I long for rest;
When cows come home along the
 bars,
And in the fold I hear the bell,
As Night, the shepherd, herds his
 stars,
I sing my song, and all is well.

There are no ears to hear my lays,
No lips to lift a word of praise;
But still, with faith unfaltering,
I live and laugh and love and sing.
What matters yon unheeding
 throng?

They cannot feel my spirit's
 spell,
Since life is sweet and love is long,
I sing my song, and all is well.

My days are never days of ease;
I till my ground and prune my
 trees.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

When ripened gold is all the plain,
I put my sickle to the grain.
I labor hard, and toil and sweat,
While others dream within the
dell;

But even while my brow is wet,
I sing my song, and all is well.

Sometimes the sun, unkindly hot,
My garden makes a desert spot;
Sometimes a blight upon the tree
Takes all my fruit away from me;
And then with throes of bitter pain
Rebellious passions rise and
swell;
But — life is more than fruit or
grain,
And so I sing, and all is well.

RETORT

“THOU art a fool,” said my head
to my heart,
“Indeed, the greatest of fools thou
art,
To be led astray by the trick of
a tress,
By a smiling face or a ribbon
smart;”
And my heart was in sore dis-
tress.

Then Phyllis came by, and her face
was fair,
The light gleamed soft on her
raven hair;
And her lips were blooming a
rosy red.

Then my heart spoke out with a
right bold air:

“Thou art worse than a fool, O
head!”

ACCOUNTABILITY

FOLKS ain't got no right to cen-
suah othah folks about dey
habits;

Him dat giv' de squir'ls de bush-
tails made de bobtails fu' de
rabbits.

Him dat built de gread big moun-
tains hollered out de little
valleys,

Him dat made de streets an' drive-
ways wasn't shamed to make
de alleys.

We is all constructed diff'ent,
d'ain't no two of us de same;

We cain't he'p ouah likes an' dis-
likes, ef we'se bad we ain't to
blame.

Ef we'se good, we need n't show
off, case you bet it ain't ouah
doin'

We gits into su'ttain channels dat
we jes' cain't he'p pu'suin'.

But we all fits into places dat no
othah ones could fill,

An' we does the things we has to,
big er little, good er ill.

John cain't tek de place o' Henry,
Su an' Sally ain't alike;

Bass ain't nuthin' like a suckah,
chub ain't nuthin' like a pike.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

When you come to think about it,
how it's all planned out it's
splendid.

Nuthin's done er evah happens,
'dout hit's somefin' dat's in-
tended;

Don't keer whut you does, you has
to, an' hit sholy beats de
dickens,—

Viney, go put on de kittle, I got
one o' mastah's chickens.

FREDERICK DOUGLASS

A HUSH is over all the teeming
lists,

And there is pause, a breath-
space in the strife;

A spirit brave has passed beyond
the mists

And vapors that obscure the sun
of life.

And Ethiopia, with bosom torn,
Laments the passing of her no-
blest born.

She weeps for him a mother's
burning tears—

She loved him with a mother's
deepest love.

He was her champion thro' direful
years,

And held her weal all other ends
above.

When Bondage held her bleeding
in the dust,

He raised her up and whispered,
“Hope and Trust.”

For her his voice, a fearless clarion,
rung

That broke in warning on the
ears of men;

For her the strong bow of his
power he strung,

And sent his arrows to the very
den

Where grim Oppression held his
bloody place

And gloated o'er the mis'ries of a
race.

And he was no soft-tongued apolo-
gist;

He spoke straightforward, fear-
lessly uncowed;

The sunlight of his truth dispelled
the mist,

And set in bold relief each dark
hued cloud;

To sin and crime he gave their
proper hue,

And hurled at evil what was evil's
due.

Through good and ill report he
cleaved his way

Right onward, with his face set
toward the heights,

Nor feared to face the foeman's
dread array,—

The lash of scorn, the sting of
petty spites.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

He dared the lightning in the
lightning's track,
And answered thunder with his
thunder back.

When men maligned him, and
their torrent wrath

In furious imprecations o'er him
broke,

He kept his counsel as he kept his
path;

'T was for his race, not for him-
self he spoke.

He knew the import of his Mas-
ter's call,

And felt himself too mighty to be
small.

No miser in the good he held was
he,—

His kindness followed his hori-
zon's rim.

His heart, his talents, and his
hands were free

To all who truly needed aught
of him.

Where poverty and ignorance
were rife,

He gave his bounty as he gave his
life.

The place and cause that first
aroused his might

Still proved its power until his
latest day.

In Freedom's lists and for the aid
of Right

Still in the foremost rank he
waged the fray;

Wrong lived; his occupation was
not gone.

He died in action with his armor
on!

We weep for him, but we have
touched his hand,

And felt the magic of his pres-
ence nigh,

The current that he sent through-
out the land,

The kindling spirit of his battle-
cry.

O'er all that holds us we shall tri-
umph yet,

And place our banner where his
hopes were set!

Oh, Douglass, thou hast passed
beyond the shore,

But still thy voice is ringing o'er
the gale!

Thou 'st taught thy race how high
her hopes may soar,

And bade her seek the heights,
nor faint, nor fail.

She will not fail, she heeds thy
stirring cry,

She knows thy guardian spirit will
be nigh,

And, rising from beneath the
chast'ning rod,

She stretches out her bleeding
hands to God!

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

LIFE

A CRUST of bread and a corner to
sleep in,
A minute to smile and an hour to
weep in,
A pint of joy to a peck of trouble,
And never a laugh but the moans
come double;
And that is life!

A crust and a corner that love
makes precious,
With a smile to warm and the
tears to refresh us;
And joy seems sweeter when cares
come after,
And a moan is the finest of foils
for laughter;
And that is life!

THE LESSON

My cot was down by a cypress
grove,
And I sat by my window the
whole night long,
And heard well up from the deep
dark wood
A mocking-bird's passionate
song.
And I thought of myself so sad
and lone,
And my life's cold winter that
knew no spring;
Of my mind so weary and sick and
wild,
Of my heart too sad to sing.

But e'en as I listened the mock-
bird's song,
A thought stole into my sad-
dened heart,
And I said, "I can cheer some
other soul
By a carol's simple art."

For oft from the darkness of
hearts and lives
Come songs that brim with joy
and light,
As out of the gloom of the cypress
grove
The mocking-bird sings at
night.

So I sang a lay for a brother's ear
In a strain to soothe his bleed-
ing heart,
And he smiled at the sound of my
voice and lyre,
Though mine was a feeble art.

But at his smile I smiled in turn,
And into my soul there came
a ray:
In trying to soothe another's woes
Mine own had passed away.

THE RISING OF THE STORM

THE lake's dark breast
Is all unrest,
It heaves with a sob and a sigh.
Like a tremulous bird,
From its slumber stirred,
The moon is a-tilt in the sky.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

From the silent deep
The waters sweep,
But faint on the cold white stones,
And the wavelets fly
With a plaintive cry
O'er the old earth's bare, bleak
bones.

And the spray upsprings
On its ghost-white wings,
And tosses a kiss at the stars;
While a water-sprite,
In sea-pearls dight,
Hums a sea-hymn's solemn bars.

Far out in the night,
On the wavering sight
I see a dark hull loom;
And its light on high,
Like a Cyclops' eye,
Shines out through the mist and
gloom.

Now the winds well up
From the earth's deep cup,
And fall on the sea and shore,
And against the pier
The waters rear
And break with a sullen roar.

Up comes the gale,
And the mist-wrought veil
Gives way to the lightning's glare,
And the cloud-drifts fall,
A sombre pall,
O'er water, earth, and air.

The storm-king flies,
His whip he plies,
And bellows down the wind.
The lightning rash
With blinding flash
Comes pricking on behind.

Rise, waters, rise,
And taunt the skies
With your swift-flitting form.
Sweep, wild winds, sweep,
And tear the deep
To atoms in the storm.

And the waters leapt,
And the wild winds swept,
And blew out the moon in the sky,
And I laughed with glee,
It was joy to me
As the storm went raging by!

SUNSET

THE river sleeps beneath the sky,
And clasps the shadows to its
breast;
The crescent moon shines dim on
high;
And in the lately radiant west
The gold is fading into gray.
Now stills the lark his festive
lay,
And mourns with me the
dying day.

While in the south the first faint
star
Lifts to the night its silver face,

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

And twinkles to the moon afar
Across the heaven's graying
space,
Low murmurs reach me from the
town,
As Day puts on her sombre crown,
And shakes her mantle darkly
down.

THE OLD APPLE-TREE

THERE'S a memory keeps a-run-
nin'
Through my weary head to-
night,
An' I see a picture dancin'
In the fire-flames' ruddy light;
'Tis the picture of an orchard
Wrapped in autumn's purple
haze,
With the tender light about it
That I loved in other days.
An' a-standin' in a corner
Once again I seem to see
The verdant leaves an' branches
Of an old apple-tree.

You perhaps would call it ugly,
An' I don't know but it's so,
When you look the tree all over
Unadorned by memory's glow;
For its boughs are gnarled an'
crooked,
An' its leaves are gettin' thin,
An' the apples of its bearin'
Would n't fill so large a bin

As they used to. But I tell you,
When it comes to pleasin' me,
It's the dearest in the orchard,—
Is that old apple-tree.

I would hide within its shelter,
Settlin' in some cosy nook,
Where no calls nor threats could
stir me

From the pages o' my book.
Oh, that quiet, sweet seclusion
In its fulness passeth words!
It was deeper than the deepest
That my sanctum now affords.
Why, the jaybirds an' the robins,
They was hand in glove with
me,
As they winked at me an' warbled
In that old apple-tree.

It was on its sturdy branches
That in summers long ago
I would tie my swing an' dangle
In contentment to an' fro,
Idly dreamin' childish fancies,
Buildin' castles in the air,
Makin' o' myself a hero
Of romances rich an' rare.
I kin shet my eyes an' see it
Jest as plain as plain kin be,
That same old swing a-danglin'
To the old apple-tree.

There's a rustic seat beneath it
That I never kin forget.
It's the place where me an'
Hallie—

Little sweetheart—used to set,

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

When we 'd wander to the orchard
So 's no listenin' ones could hear
As I whispered sugared nonsense
Into her little willin' ear.
Now my gray old wife is Hallie,
An' I 'm grayer still than she,
But I 'll not forget our courtin'
'Neath the old apple-tree.

Where healing waters flow
Do thou my footsteps lead,
My heart is aching so;
Thy gracious balm I need.

PASSION AND LOVE

Life for us ain't all been summer,
But I guess we 've had our share
Of its flittin' joys an' pleasures,
An' a sprinklin' of its care.
Oft the skies have smiled upon us;
Then again we've seen 'em
frown,
Though our load was ne'er so
heavy
That we longed to lay it down.
But when death does come
a-callin',
This my last request shall be,—
That they 'll bury me an' Hallie
'Neath the old apple tree.

A MAIDEN wept and, as a com-
forter,
Came one who cried, "I love
thee," and he seized
Her in his arms and kissed her
with hot breath,
That dried the tears upon her
flaming cheeks.
While evermore his boldly blaz-
ing eye
Burned into hers; but she uncom-
forted
Shrank from his arms and only
wept the more.

Then one came and gazed mutely
in her face
With wide and wistful eyes; but
still aloof
He held himself; as with a rev-
erent fear,
As one who knows some sacred
presence nigh.
And as she wept he mingled tear
with tear,
That cheered her soul like dew a
dusty flower,—
Until she smiled, approached, and
touched his hand!

A PRAYER

O LORD, the hard-won miles
Have worn my stumbling feet:
Oh, soothe me with thy smiles,
And make my life complete.

The thorns were thick and keen
Where'er I trembling trod;
The way was long between
My wounded feet and God.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

THE SEEDLING

As a quiet little seedling
Lay within its darksome bed,
To itself it fell a-talking,
And this is what it said:

"I am not so very robust,
But I'll do the best I can;"
And the seedling from that
moment
Its work of life began.

So it pushed a little leaflet
Up into the light of day,
To examine the surroundings
And show the rest the way.

The leaflet liked the prospect,
So it called its brother, Stem;
Then two other leaflets heard it,
And quickly followed them.

To be sure, the haste and hurry
Made the seedling sweat and
pant;
But almost before it knew it
It found itself a plant.

The sunshine poured upon it,
And the clouds they gave a
shower;
And the little plant kept growing
Till it found itself a flower.

Little folks, be like the seedling,
Always do the best you can;
Every child must share life's
labor

Just as well as every man.

And the sun and showers will
help you
Through the lonesome, strug-
gling hours,
Till you raise to light and beauty
Virtue's fair, unfading flowers.

PROMISE

I GREW a rose within a garden
fair,
And, tending it with more than
loving care,
I thought how, with the glory of
its bloom,
I should the darkness of my life
illumine;
And, watching, ever smiled to see
the lusty bud
Drink freely in the summer sun to
tinct its blood.

My rose began to open, and its
hue
Was sweet to me as to its sun and
dew;
I watched it taking on its ruddy
flame
Until the day of perfect blooming
came,
Then hasted I with smiles to find
it blushing red—
Too late! Some thoughtless child
had plucked my rose and fled!

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

FULFILMENT.

I GREW a rose once more to please
mine eyes.
All things to aid it—dew, sun,
wind, fair skies—
Were kindly; and to shield it
from despoil,
I fenced it safely in with grateful
toil.
No other hand than mine shall
pluck this flower, said I,
And I was jealous of the bee that
hovered nigh.
It grew for days; I stood hour
after hour
To watch the slow unfolding of
the flower,
And then I did not leave its side
at all,
Lest some mischance my flower
should befall.
At last, oh joy! the central petals
burst apart.
It blossomed—but, alas! a worm
was at its heart!

SONG

My heart to thy heart,
My hand to thine;
My lip to thy lips,
Kisses are wine
Brewed for the lover in sunshine
and shade;
Let me drink deep, then, my
African maid.

Lily to lily,
Rose unto rose;
My love to thy love
Tenderly grows.
Rend not the oak and the ivy in
twain,
Nor the swart maid from her
swarthier swain.

AN ANTE-BELLUM SER- MON

WE is gathahed hyeah, my
brothahs,
In dis howlin' wildaness,
Fu' to speak some words of com-
fo't
To each othah in distress.
An' we chooses fu' ouah subjec'
Dis—we'll 'splain it by an'
by;
"An' de Lawd said, 'Moses,
Moses,'
An' de man said, 'Hyeah am
I.'"

Now ole Pher'oh, down in Egypt,
Was de wuss man evah bo'n,
An' he had de Hebrew chillun
Down dah wukin' in his co'n;
'T well de Lawd got tiahed o' his
foolin',
An' sez he: "I'll let him
know—
Look hyeah, Moses, go tell
Pher'oh
Fu' to let dem chillun go."

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

"An' ef he refuse to do it,
 I will make him rue de houah,
 Fu' I'll empty down on Egypt
 All de vials of my powah."
 Yes, he did — an' Pher'oh's ahmy
 Was n't wuth a ha'f a dime;
 Fu' de Lawd will he'p his chillun,
 You kin trust him evah time.

An' yo' enemies may 'sail you
 In de back an' in de front;
 But de Lawd is all aroun' you,
 Fu' to ba' de battle's brunt.
 Dey kin fo'ge yo' chains an'
 shackles

F'om de mountains to de sea;
 But de Lawd will sen' some
 Moses
 Fu' to set his chillun free.

An' de lan' shall hyeah his thun-
 dah,

Lak a blas' f'om Gab'el's ho'n,
 Fu' de Lawd of hosts is mighty
 When he girds his ahmor on.

But fu' feah some one mistakes
 me,

I will pause right hyeah to say,
 Dat I'm still a-preachin' an'cient,
 I ain't talkin' 'bout to-day.

But I tell you, fellah christuns,
 Things 'll happen mighty
 strange;

Now, de Lawd done dis fu' Isrul,
 An' his ways don't nevah
 change,

An' de love he showed to Isrul
 Was n't all on Isrul spent;
 Now don't run an' tell yo' mas-
 tahs

Dat I's preachin' discontent.

'Cause I is n't; I'se a-judgin'
 Bible people by deir ac's;
 I'se a-givin' you de Scriptuah,
 I'se a-handin' you de fac's.
 Cose ole Pher'oh b'lieved in
 slav'ry,

But de Lawd he let him see,
 Dat de people he put bref in,—
 Evah mothah's son was free.

An' dahs othahs thinks lak
 Pher'oh,

But dey calls de Scriptuah liar,
 Fu' de Bible says "a servant
 Is a-worthy of his hire."

An' you cain't git roun' nor thoo
 dat,

An' you cain't git ovah it,
 Fu' whatevah place you git in,
 Dis hyeah Bible too 'll fit.

So you see de Lawd's intention,
 Evah sence de worl' began,
 Was dat His almighty freedom
 Should belong to evah man,
 But I think it would be bertah,
 Ef I'd pause agin to say,
 Dat I'm talkin' 'bout ouah free-
 dom

In a Bibleistic way.

But de Moses is a-comin',
 An' he's comin', suah and fas'

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

We kin hyeah his feet a-trompin',
We kin hyeah his trumpet blas'.
But I want to wa'n you people,
Don't you git too brigity;
An' don't you git to braggin'
'Bout dese things, you wait an'
see.

But when Moses wif his powah
Comes an' sets us chillun free,
We will praise de gracious Mastah
Dat has gin us liberty;
An' we'll shout ouah halleluyahs,
On dat mighty reck'nin' day,
When we 'se reco'nised ez citiz'—
Huh uh! Chillun, let us pray!

ODE TO ETHIOPIA

O MOTHER RACE! to thee I
bring

This pledge of faith unwavering,
This tribute to thy glory.

I know the pangs which thou
didst feel,

When Slavery crushed thee with
its heel,

With thy dear blood all gory.

Sad days were those — ah, sad
indeed!

But through the land the fruitful
seed

Of better times was growing.

The plant of freedom upward
sprung,

And spread its leaves so fresh and
young —

Its blossoms now are blowing.

On every hand in this fair land,
Proud Ethiope's swarthy children
stand

Beside their fairer neighbor;
The forests flee before their stroke,
Their hammers ring, their forges
smoke,—

They stir in honest labour.

They tread the fields where
honour calls;

Their voices sound through sen-
ate halls

In majesty and power.

To right they cling; the hymns
they sing

Up to the skies in beauty ring,
And bolder grow each hour.

Be proud, my Race, in mind and
soul;

Thy name is writ on Glory's scroll
In characters of fire.

High 'mid the clouds of Fame's
bright sky

Thy banner's blazoned folds now
fly,

And truth shall lift them
higher.

Thou hast the right to noble pride,
Whose spotless robes were purified
By blood's severe baptism.

Upon thy brow the cross was laid,

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

And labour's painful sweat-beads
made
A consecrating chrism.

No other race, or white or black,
When bound as thou wert, to the
rack,

So seldom stooped to grieving;
No other race, when free again,
Forgot the past and proved them
men

So noble in forgiving.

Go on and up! Our souls and
eyes

Shall follow thy continuous rise;

Our ears shall list thy story

From bards who from thy root
shall spring,

And proudly tune their lyres to
sing

Of Ethiopia's glory.

THE CORN-STALK FIDDLE

WHEN the corn's all cut and the
bright stalks shine

Like the burnished spears of a
field of gold;

When the field-mice rich on the
nubbins dine,

And the frost comes white and
the wind blows cold;

Then it's heigho! fellows and hi-
diddle-diddle,

For the time is ripe for the corn-
stalk fiddle.

And you take a stalk that is
straight and long,

With an expert eye to its
worthy points,

And you think of the bubbling
strains of song

That are bound between its
pithy joints —

Then you cut out strings, with a
bridge in the middle,

With a corn-stalk bow for a corn-
stalk fiddle.

Then the strains that grow as you
draw the bow

O'er the yielding strings with
a practised hand!

And the music's flow never loud
but low

Is the concert note of a fairy
band.

Oh, your dainty songs are a misty
riddle

To the simple sweets of the corn-
stalk fiddle.

When the eve comes on, and our
work is done,

And the sun drops down with a
tender glance,

With their hearts all prime for
the harmless fun,

Come the neighbor girls for
the evening's dance,

And they wait for the well-
known twist and twid-
dle —

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

More time than tune—from the
corn-stalk fiddle.

Then brother Jabez takes the bow,
While Ned stands off with Susan Bland,

Then Henry stops by Milly Snow,
And John takes Nellie Jones's hand,

While I pair off with Mandy Biddle,

And 'scrape, scrape, scrape goes
the corn-stalk fiddle.

"Salute your partners," comes the
call,

"All join hands and circle
round,"

"Grand train back," and "Balance
all,"

Footsteps lightly spurn the
ground.

"Take your lady and balance
down the middle"

To the merry strains of the corn-
stalk fiddle.

So the night goes on and the dance
is o'er,

And the merry girls are home-
ward gone,

But I see it all in my sleep once
more,

And I dream till the very break
of dawn

Of an impish dance on a red-hot
griddle

To the screech and scrape of a
corn-stalk fiddle.

THE MASTER-PLAYER

AN old, worn harp that had been
played

Till all its strings were loose and
frayed,

Joy, Hate, and Fear, each one
essayed,

To play. But each in turn had
found

No sweet responsiveness of sound.

Then Love the Master-Player
came

With heaving breast and eyes
afame;

The Harp he took all undismayed,
Smote on its strings, still strange
to song,

And brought forth music sweet
and strong.

THE MYSTERY

I WAS not; now I am—a few
days hence

I shall not be; I fain would look
before

And after, but can neither do;
some Power

Or lack of power says "no" to all
I would.

I stand upon a wide and sunless
plain,

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

Nor chart nor steel to guide my
steps aright.

Whene'er, o'ercoming fear, I dare
to move,

I grope without direction and by
chance.

Some feign to hear a voice and
feel a hand

That draws them ever upward
thro' the gloom.

But I — I hear no voice and touch
no hand,

Tho' oft thro' silence infinite I
list,

And strain my hearing to supernal
sounds;

Tho' oft thro' fateful darkness do
I reach,

And stretch my hand to find that
other hand.

I question of th' eternal bending
skies

That seem to neighbor with the
novice earth;

But they roll on, and daily shut
their eyes

On me, as I one day shall do on
them,

And tell me not the secret that I
ask.

NOT THEY WHO SOAR

Nor they who soar, but they who
plod

Their rugged way, unhelped, to
God

Are heroes; they who higher fare,
And, flying, fan the upper air,

Miss all the toil that hugs the sod.
'Tis they whose backs have felt
the rod,

Whose feet have pressed the path
unshod,

May smile upon defeated care,
Not they who soar.

High up there are no thorns to
prod,

Nor boulders lurking 'neath the
clod

To turn the keenness of the share,
For flight is ever free and rare;

But heroes they the soil who've
trod,

Not they who soar!

WHITTIER

Not o'er thy dust let there be
spent

The gush of maudlin sentiment;
Such drift as that is not for thee,

Whose life and deeds and songs
agree,

Sublime in their simplicity.

Nor shall the sorrowing tear be
shed.

O singer sweet, thou art not
dead!

In spite of time's malignant chill,
With living fire thy songs shall
thrill,

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

And men shall say, "He liveth
still!"

Great poets never die, for Earth
Doth count their lives of too great
worth

To lose them from her treasured
store;

So shalt thou live for evermore —
Though far thy form from mortal
ken —

Deep in the hearts and minds of
men.

TWO SONGS

A BEE that was searching for
sweets one day

Through the gate of a rose garden
happened to stray.

In the heart of a rose he hid away,
And forgot in his bliss the light of
day,

As sipping his honey he buzzed in
song;

Though day was waning, he lin-
gered long,

For the rose was sweet, so
sweet.

A robin sits pluming his ruddy
breast,

And a madrigal sings to his love
in her nest:

"Oh, the skies they are blue, the
fields are green,

And the birds in your nest will
soon be seen!"

She hangs on his words with a
thrill of love,

And chirps to him as he sits above
For the song is sweet, so sweet.

A maiden was out on a summer's
day

With the winds and the waves
and the flowers at play;

And she met with a youth of
gentle air,

With the light of the sunshine on
his hair.

Together they wandered the flow-
ers among;

They loved, and loving they lin-
gered long,

For to love is sweet, so sweet.

BIRD of my lady's bower,
Sing her a song;

Tell her that every hour,
All the day long,

Thoughts of her come to me,
Filling my brain

With the warm ecstasy
Of love's refrain.

Little bird! happy bird!
Being so near,

Where e'en her slightest word
Thou mayest hear,

Seeing her glancing eyes,
Sheen of her hair,

Thou art in paradise,—
Would I were there.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

I am so far away,
Thou art so near;
Plead with her, birdling gay,
Plead with my dear.
Rich be thy recompense,
Fine be thy fee,
If through thine eloquence
She hearken me.

A BANJO SONG

OH, dere 's lots o' keer an' trouble
In dis world to swaller down;
An' ol' Sorrer 's purty lively
In her way o' gittin' roun'.
Yet dere 's times when I furgit
em,—
Aches an' pains an' troubles
all,—
An' it 's when I tek at ebenin'
My ol' banjo f'om de wall.

'Bout de time dat night is fallin'
An' my daily wu'k is done,
An' above de shady hilltops
I kin see de settin' sun;
When de quiet, restful shadders
Is beginnin' jes' to fall,—
Den I take de little banjo
F'om its place upon de wall.

Den my fam'ly gadders roun' me
In de fadin' o' de light,
Ez I strike de strings to try 'em
Ef dey all is tuned er-right.
An' it seems we 're so nigh heaben
We kin hyeah de angels sing

When de music o' dat banjo
Sets my cabin all er-ring.

An' my wife an' all de othahs,—
Male an' female, small an'
big,—

Even up to gray-haired granny,
Seem jes' boun' to do a jig;
'Twell I change de style o' music,
Change de movement an' de
time,

An' de ringin' little banjo
Plays an ol' hea't-feelin' hime.

An' somehow my th'ot gits choky,
An' a lump keeps tryin' to rise
Lak it wan'ed to ketch de water
Dat was flowin' to my eyes;
An' I feel dat I could sorter
Knock de socks clean off o' sin
Ez I hyeah my po' ol' granny
Wif huh tremblin' voice jine in.

Den we all th'ow in our voices
Fu' to he'p de chune out too,
Lak a big camp-meetin' choiry
Tryin' to sing a mou'nah th'oo.
An' our th'oahts let out de music,
Sweet an' solemn, loud an' free,
'Twell de raftahs o' my cabin
Echo wif de melody.

Oh, de music o' de banjo,
Quick an' deb'lish, solemn,
slow,

Is de greates' joy an' solace
Dat a weary slave kin know!

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

So jes' let me hyeah it ringin',
Dough de chune be po' an'
rough,
It's a pleasure; an' de pleasures
O' dis life is few enough.

Now, de blessed little angels
Up in heaben, we are told,
Don't do nothin' all dere lifetime
'Ceptin' play on ha'ps o' gold.
Now I think heaben 'd be mo'
homelike
Ef we 'd hyeah some music fall
F'om a real ol'-fashioned banjo,
Like dat one upon de wall.

LONGING

If you could sit with me beside
the sea to-day,
And whisper with me sweetest
dreamings o'er and o'er;
I think I should not find the
clouds so dim and gray,
And not so loud the waves com-
plaining at the shore.

If you could sit with me upon the
shore to-day,
And hold my hand in yours as in
the days of old,
I think I should not mind the chill
baptismal spray,
Nor find my hand and heart and
all the world so cold.

If you could walk with me upon
the strand to-day,

And tell me that my longing love
had won your own,
I think all my sad thoughts would
then be put away,
And I could give back laughter
for the Ocean's moan!

THE PATH

THERE are no beaten paths to
Glory's height,
There are no rules to compass
greatness known;
Each for himself must cleave a
path alone,
And press his own way forward
in the fight.
Smooth is the way to ease and
calm delight,
And soft the road Sloth chooseth
for her own;
But he who craves the flower of
life full-blown,
Must struggle up in all his armor
dight!
What though the burden bear him
sorely down
And crush to dust the mountain
of his pride,
Oh, then, with strong heart let
him still abide;
For rugged is the roadway to
renown,
Nor may he hope to gain the en-
vied crown,
Till he hath thrust the looming
rocks aside.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

THE LAWYERS' WAYS

I 'VE been list'nin' to them lawyers
In the court house up the street,
An' I've come to the conclusion
That I'm most completely beat.
Fust one feller riz to argy,
An' he boldly waded in
As he dressed the tremblin' pris'ner
In a coat o' deep-dyed sin.

Why, he painted him all over
In a hue o' blackest crime,
An' he smeared his reputation
With the thickest kind o'
grime,
Tell I found myself a-wond'rin',
In a misty way and dim,
How the Lord had come to fashion
Sich an awful man as him.

Then the other lawyer started,
An' with brimmin', tearful
eyes,
Said his client was a martyr
That was brought to sacrifice.
An' he give to that same pris'ner
Every blessed human grace,
Tell I saw the light o' virtue
Fairly shinin' from his face.

Then I own 'at I was puzzled
How sich things could rightly
be;
An' this aggrervatin' question
Seems to keep a-puzzlin' me.
So, will some one please inform
me,
An' this mystery unroll —

How an angel an' a devil
Can persess the self-same soul?

ODE FOR MEMORIAL DAY

DONE are the toils and the wearisome marches,

Done is the summons of bugle
and drum.

Softly and sweetly the sky over-
arches,

Shelt'ring a land where Rebel-
lion is dumb.

Dark were the days of the coun-
try's derangement,

Sad were the hours when the
conflict was on,

But through the gloom of fraternal
estrangement

God sent his light, and we wel-
come the dawn.

O'er the expanse of our mighty
dominions,

Sweeping away to the uttermost
parts,

Peace, the wide-flying, on untiring
pinions,

Bringeth her message of joy to
our hearts.

Ah, but this joy which our minds
cannot measure,

What did it cost for our fathers
to gain!

Bought at the price of the heart's
dearest treasure,

Born out of travail and sorrow
and pain;

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Born in the battle where fleet
Death was flying,
Slaying with sabre-stroke bloody
and fell;

Born where the heroes and mar-
tyrs were dying,
Torn by the fury of bullet and
shell.

Ah, but the day is past: silent the
rattle,
And the confusion that followed
the fight.

Peace to the heroes who died in
the battle,
Martyrs to truth and the crown-
ing of Right!

Out of the blood of a conflict fra-
ternal,

Out of the dust and the dimness
of death,

Burst into blossoms of glory eter-
nal

Flowers that sweeten the world
with their breath.

Flowers of charity, peace, and
devotion

Bloom in the hearts that are
empty of strife;

Love that is boundless and broad
as the ocean

Leaps into beauty and fulness
of life.

So, with the singing of pæans and
chorals,

And with the flag flashing high
in the sun,

Place on the graves of our heroes
the laurels

Which their unfaltering valor
has won!

PREMONITION

DEAR heart, good-night!

Nay, list awhile that sweet voice
singing

When the world is all so bright,
And the sound of song sets the
heart a-ringing,

Oh, love, it is not right —

Not then to say, "Good-
night."

Dear heart, good-night!

The late winds in the lake weeds
shiver,

And the spray flies cold and
white.

And the voice that sings gives a
telltale quiver —

"Ah, yes, the world is bright,

But, dearest heart, good-
night!"

Dear heart, good-night!

And do not longer seek to hold
me!

For my soul is in affright

As the fearful glooms in their
pall enfold me.

See him who sang how white

And still; so, dear, good-
night.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

Dear heart, good-night!
Thy hand I'll press no more for-
ever,
And mine eyes shall lose the
light;
For the great white wraith by the
winding river
Shall check my steps with
might.
So, dear, good-night, good-
night!

RETROSPECTION

WHEN you and I were young, the
days
Were filled with scent of pink
and rose,
And full of joy from dawn till
close,
From morning's mist till evening's
haze.
And when the robin sung his
song
The verdant woodland ways
along,
We whistled louder than he
sung.
And school was joy, and work was
sport
For which the hours were all too
short,
When you and I were young,
my boy,
When you and I were young.

When you and I were young, the
woods
Brimmed bravely o'er with every
joy
To charm the happy-hearted
boy.
The quail turned out her timid
broods;
The prickly copse, a hostess
fine,
Held high black cups of harm-
less wine;
And low the laden grape-vine
swung
With beads of night-kissed ame-
thyst
Where buzzing lovers held their
tryst,
When you and I were young,
my boy,
When you and I were young.

When you and I were young, the
cool
And fresh wind fanned our
fevered brows
When tumbling o'er the scented
mows,
Or stripping by the dimpling
pool,
Sedge-fringed about its shim-
mering face,
Save where we'd worn an en-
t'ring place.
How with our shouts the
calm banks rung!

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

How flashed the spray as we
plunged in,—

Pure gems that never caused a
sin!

When you and I were young,
my boy,

When you and I were young,

When you and I were young, we
heard

All sounds of Nature with de-
light,—

The whirr of wing in sudden
flight,

The chirping of the baby-bird.

The columbine's red bells were
rung;

The locust's vested chorus
sung;

While every wind his zithern
strung

To high and holy-sounding keys,
And played sonatas in the trees—

When you and I were young,
my boy,

When you and I were young.

When you and I were young, we
knew

To shout and laugh, to work
and play,

And night was partner to the
day

In all our joys. So swift time
flew

On silent wings that, ere we
wist,

The fleeting years had fled un-
missed;

And from our hearts this cry
was wrung—

To fill with fond regret and tears
The days of our remaining years—

“When you and I were young,
my boy,

When you and I were young.”

UNEXPRESSED

DEEP in my heart that aches with
the repression,

And strives with plenitude of
bitter pain,

There lives a thought that clamors
for expression,

And spends its undelivered
force in vain.

What boots it that some other
may have thought it?

The right of thoughts' expres-
sion is divine;

The price of pain I pay for it has
bought it,

I care not who lays claim to it
—'t is mine!

And yet not mine until it be deliv-
ered;

The manner of its birth shall
prove the test.

Alas, alas, my rock of pride is
shivered—

I beat my brow—the thought
still unexpressed.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

SONG OF SUMMER

Dis is gospel weathah sho'—
Hills is sawt o' hazy.
Meddahs level ez a flo'
Callin' to de lazy.
Sky all white wif streaks o' blue,
Sunshine softly gleamin',
D'ain't no wuk hit 's right to do,
Nothin' 's right but dreamin'.

Dreamin' by de rivah side
Wif de watahs glist'nin',
Feelin' good an' satisfied
Ez you lay a-list'nin'
To the little nakid boys
Splashin' in de watah,
Hollerin' fu' to spress deir joys
Jes' lak youngsters ought to.

Squir'l a-tippin' on his toes,
So 's to hide an' view you;
Whole flocks o' camp-meetin'
crows
Shoutin' hallelujah.
Peckahwood erpon de tree
Tappin' lak a hammah;
Jaybird chattin' wif a bee,
Tryin' to teach him grammah.

Breeze is blowin' wif perfume,
Jes' enough to tease you;
Hollyhocks is all in bloom,
Smellin' fu' to please you.
Go 'way, folks, an' let me 'lone,
Times is gettin' dearah—
Summah's settin' on de th'one,
An' I 'm a-layin' neah huh!

SPRING SONG

A BLUE-BELL springs upon the
ledge,
A lark sits singing in the hedge;
Sweet perfumes scent the balmy
air,
And life is brimming everywhere.
What lark and breeze and blue-
bird sing,
Is Spring, Spring, Spring!

No more the air is sharp and cold;
The planter wends across the wold,
And, glad, beneath the shining
sky
We wander forth, my love and I.
And ever in our hearts doth ring
This song of Spring, Spring!

For life is life and love is love,
'Twixt maid and man or dove and
dove.
Life may be short, life may be
long,
But love will come, and to its
song
Shall this refrain for ever cling
Of Spring, Spring, Spring!

TO LOUISE

OH, the poets may sing of their
Lady Irenes,
And may rave in their rhymes
about wonderful queens;
But I throw my poetical wings to
the breeze,

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

And soar in a song to my Lady
Louise.

A sweet little maid, who is dearer,
I ween,

Than any fair duchess, or even a
queen.

When speaking of her I can't plod
in my prose,

For she's the wee lassie who gave
me a rose.

Since poets, from seeing a lady's
lip curled,

Have written fair verse that has
sweetened the world;

Why, then, should not I give the
space of an hour

To making a song in return for a
flower?

I have found in my life — it has
not been so long —

There are too few of flowers — too
little of song.

So out of that blossom, this lay of
mine grows,

For the dear little lady who gave
me the rose.

I thank God for innocence, dearer
than Art,

That lights on a by-way which
leads to the heart,

And led by an impulse no less
than divine,

Walks into the temple and sits at
the shrine.

I would rather pluck daisies that
grow in the wild,

Or take one simple rose from the
hand of a child,

Then to breathe the rich fragrance
of flowers that bide

In the gardens of luxury, passion,
and pride.

I know not, my wee one, how
came you to know

Which way to my heart was the
right way to go;

Unless in your purity, soul-clean
and clear,

God whispers his messages into
your ear.

You have now had my song, let
me end with a prayer

That your life may be always
sweet, happy, and fair;

That your joys may be many, and
absent your woes,

O dear little lady who gave me
the rose!

THE RIVALS

'T WAS three an' thirty year ago,
When I was ruther young, you
know,

I had my last an' only fight
About a gal one summer night.

'T was me an' Zekel Johnson;
Zeke

'N' me'd be'n spattin' 'bout a
week,

Each of us tryin' his best to show
That he was Liza Jones's beau.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

We could n't neither prove the
 thing,
 Fur she was fur too sharp to fling
 One over fur the other one
 An' by so doin' stop the fun
 That we chaps did n't have the
 sense
 To see she got at our expense,
 But that 's the way a feller does,
 Fur boys is fools an' allus was.
 An' when they's females in the
 game
 I reckon men 's about the same.
 Well, Zeke an' me went on that
 way
 An' fussed an' quarrelled day by
 day;
 While Liza, mindin' not the
 fuss,
 Jest kep' a-goin' with both of us,
 Tell we pore chaps, that's Zeke
 an' me,
 Was jest plum mad with jeal-
 ousy.
 Well, fur a time we kep' our
 places,
 An' only showed by frownin'
 faces
 An' looks 'at well our meanin'
 boded
 How full o' fight we both was
 loaded.
 At last it come, the thing broke
 out,
 An' this is how it come about.
 One night ('t was fair, you 'll all
 agree)

I got Eliza's company,
 An' leavin' Zekel in the lurch,
 Went trottin' off with her to
 church.
 An' jest as we had took our seat
 (Eliza lookin' fair an' sweet),
 Why, I jest could n't help but grin
 When Zekel come a-bouncin' in
 As furious as the law allows.
 He'd jest be'n up to Liza's house,
 To find her gone, then come to
 church
 To have this end put to his
 search.
 I guess I laffed that meetin'
 through,
 An' not a mortal word I knew
 Of what the preacher preached er
 read
 Er what the choir sung er said.
 Fur every time I'd turn my head
 I could n't skeercely help but see
 'At Zekel had his eye on me.
 An' he 'ud sort o' turn an' twist
 An' grind his teeth an' shake his
 fist.
 I laughed, fur la! the hull church
 seen us,
 An' knowed that suthin' was be-
 tween us.
 Well, meetin' out, we started
 hum,
 I sorter feelin' what would come.
 We'd jest got out, when up
 stepped Zeke,
 An' said, " Scuse me, I'd like to
 speak

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

To you a minute." "Cert," said
I—

A-nudgin' Liza on the sly
An' laughin' in my sleeve with
glee,

I asked her, please, to pardon me.
We walked away a step er two,
Jest to git out o' Liza's view,
An' then Zeke said, "I want to
know

Ef you think you 're Eliza's beau,
An' 'at I'm goin' to let her go
Hum with sich a chap as you?"
An' I said bold, "You bet I do."
Then Zekel, sneerin', said 'at he
Did n't want to hender me.

But then he 'lowed the gal was
his

An' 'at he guessed he knowed his
biz,

An' was n't feared o' all my kin
With all my friends an' chums
throwed in.

Some other things he mentioned
there

That no born man could no ways
bear

Er think o' ca'mly tryin' to stan'
Ef Zeke had be'n the bigges' man
In town, an' not the leanest runt
'At time an' labor ever stunt.

An' so I let my fist go "bim,"
I thought I'd mos' nigh finished
him.

But Zekel did n't take it so.
He jest ducked down an' dodged
my blow

An' then come back at me so hard,
I guess I must 'a' hurt the yard,
Er spilet the grass plot where I
fell,

An' sakes alive it hurt me; well,
It would n't be'n so bad, you see,
But he jest kep' a-hittin' me.
An' I hit back an' kicked an'
pawed,

But 't seemed 't was mostly air I
clawed,

While Zekel used his science well
A-makin' every motion tell.

He punched an' hit, why, good-
ness lands,

Seemed like he had a dozen hands.
Well, afterwhile they stopped the
fuss,

An' some one kindly parted us.
All beat an' cuffed an' clawed an'
scratched,

An' needin' both our faces
patched,

Each started hum a different way;
An' what o' Liza, do you say,
Why, Liza—little humbug—
dern her,

Why, she'd gone home with
Hiram Turner.

THE LOVER AND THE MOON

A LOVER whom duty called over
the wave,

With himself communed:
"Will my love be true

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

If left to herself? Had I better not sue
Some friend to watch over her,
good and grave?
But my friend might fail in my
need," he said,
"And I return to find love
dead.
Since friendships fade like the
flow'rs of June,
I will leave her in charge of the
stable moon."
Then he said to the moon: "O
dear old moon,
Who for years and years from
thy thrown above
Hast nurtured and guarded
young lovers and love,
My heart has but come to its
waiting June,
And the promise time of the
budding vine;
Oh, guard thee well this love
of mine."
And he harked him then while
all was still,
And the pale moon answered
and said, "I will."
And he sailed in his ship o'er
many seas,
And he wandered wide o'er
strange far strands:
In isles of the south and in Orient
lands,
Where pestilence lurks in the
breath of the breeze.

But his star was high, so he
braved the main,
And sailed him blithely home
again;
And with joy he bended his
footsteps soon
To learn of his love from the
matron moon.

She sat as of yore, in her olden
place,
Serene as death, in her silver
chair.
A white rose gleamed in her
whiter hair,
And the tint of a blush was on
her face.
At sight of the youth she sadly
bowed
And hid her face 'neath a gra-
cious cloud.
She faltered faint on the night's
dim marge,
But "How," spoke the youth,
"have you kept your
charge?"

The moon was sad at a trust ill-
kept;
The blush went out in her
blanching cheek,
And her voice was timid and
low and weak,
As she made her plea and sighed
and wept.
"Oh, another prayed and an-
other plead,

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

And I could n't resist," she
answering said;

"But love still grows in the
hearts of men:

Go forth, dear youth, and love
again."

But he turned him away from her
proffered grace.

"Thou art false, O moon, as
the hearts of men,

I will not, will not love again."

And he turned sheer 'round with
a soul-sick face

To the sea, and cried: "Sea,
curse the moon,

Who makes her vows and for-
gets so soon."

And the awful sea with anger
stirred,

And his breast heaved hard as
he lay and heard.

And ever the moon wept down in
rain,

And ever her sighs rose high in
wind;

But the earth and sea were deaf
and blind,

And she wept and sighed her
griefs in vain.

And ever at night, when the
storm is fierce,

The cries of a wraith through
the thunder pierce;

And the waves strain their aw-
ful hands on high

To tear the false moon from the
sky.

CONSCIENCE AND RE- MORSE

"GOOD-BYE," I said to my con-
science —

"Good-bye for aye and aye,"

And I put her hands off harshly,

And turned my face away;

And conscience smitten sorely

Returned not from that day.

But a time came when my spirit

Grew weary of its pace;

And I cried: "Come back, my
conscience;

I long to see thy face."

But conscience cried: "I cannot;

Remorse sits in my place."

IONE

I

AH, yes, 't is sweet still to remem-
ber,

Though 't were less painful to
forget;

For while my heart glows like an
ember,

Mine eyes with sorrow's drops
are wet,

And, oh, my heart is aching
yet.

It is a law of mortal pain

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

That old wounds, long accounted well,
Beneath the memory's potent spell,
Will wake to life and bleed again.

So 't is with me; it might be better

If I should turn no look behind,—

If I could curb my heart, and fetter

From reminiscent gaze my mind,

Or let my soul go blind — go blind!

But would I do it if I could?

Nay! ease at such a price were spurned;

For, since my love was once returned,

All that I suffer seemeth good.

I know, I know it is the fashion,
When love has left some heart distressed,

To weight the air with wordful passion;

But I am glad that in my breast

I ever held so dear a guest.

Love does not come at every nod,
Or every voice that calleth
"hasten;"

He seeketh out some heart to chasten,

And whips it, wailing, up to God!

Love is no random road wayfarer
Who where he may must sip his glass.

Love is the King, the Purple-Wearer,

Whose guard recks not of tree or grass

To blaze the way that he may pass.

What if my heart be in the blast
That heralds his triumphant way;

Shall I repine, shall I not say:

"Rejoice, my heart, the King has passed!"

In life, each heart holds some sad story —

The saddest ones are never told.

I, too, have dreamed of fame and glory,

And viewed the future bright with gold;

But that is as a tale long told.

Mine eyes have lost their youthful flash,

My cunning hand has lost its art;

I am not old, but in my heart
The ember lies beneath the ash.

I loved! Why not? My heart was youthful,

My mind was filled with healthy thought.

He doubts not whose own self is truthful,

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Doubt by dishonesty is taught;
So loved I boldly, fearing
naught.

I did not walk this lowly earth;
Mine was a newer, higher
sphere,

Where youth was long and life
was dear,

And all save love was little worth.

Her likeness! Would that I
might limn it,

As Love did, with enduring
art;

Nor dust of days nor death may
dim it,

Where it lies graven on my
heart,

Of this sad fabric of my life a
part.

I would that I might paint her
now

As I beheld her in that day,

Ere her first bloom had passed
away,

And left the lines upon her brow.

A face serene that, beaming
brightly,

Disarmed the hot sun's glances
bold.

A foot that kissed the ground so
lightly,

He frowned in wrath and
deemed her cold,

But loved her still though he
was old.

A form where every maiden grace
Bloomed to perfection's richest
flower,—

The statued pose of conscious
power,

Like lithe-limbed Dian's of the
chase.

Beneath a brow too fair for frown-
ing,

Like moon-lit deeps that glass
the skies

Till all the hosts above seem
drowning,

Looked forth her steadfast ha-
zel eyes,

With gaze serene and purely
wise.

And over all, her tresses rare,
Which, when, with his desire

grown weak,

The Night bent down to kiss
her cheek,

Entrapped and held him captive
there.

This was Ione; a spirit finer
Ne'er burned to ash its house
of clay;

A soul instinct with fire diviner
Ne'er fled athwart the face of
day,

And tempted Time with earthly
stay.

Her loveliness was not alone
Of face and form and tresses'
hue;

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

For aye a pure, high soul shone
through
Her every act: this was Ione.

·II

'T was in the radiant summer
weather,
When God looked, smiling,
from the sky;
And we went wand'ring much to-
gether
By wood and lane, Ione and
I,
Attracted by the subtle tie
Of common thoughts and com-
mon tastes,
Of eyes whose vision saw the
same,
And freely granted beauty's
claim
Where others found but worthless
wastes.

We paused to hear the far bells
ringing
Across the distance, sweet and
clear.
We listened to the wild bird's
singing
The song he meant for his
mate's ear,
And deemed our chance to do
so dear.
We loved to watch the warrior
Sun,
With flaming shield and flaunt-
ing crest,

Go striding down the gory
West,
When Day's long fight was fought
and won.

And life became a different
story;
Where'er I looked, I saw new
light.
Earth's self assumed a greater
glory,
Mine eyes were cleared to
fuller sight.
Then first I saw the need and
might
Of that fair band, the singing
throng,
Who, gifted with the skill di-
vine,
Take up the threads of life,
spun fine,
And weave them into soulful
song.

They sung for me, whose passion
pressing
My soul, found vent in song
nor line.
They bore the burden of express-
ing
All that I felt, with art's de-
sign,
And every word of theirs was
mine.
I read them to Ione, ofttimes,
By hill and shore, beneath fair
skies,

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

And she looked deeply in mine
eyes,
And knew my love spoke through
their rhymes.

Her life was like the stream that
floweth,
And mine was like the waiting
sea;

Her love was like the flower that
bloweth,
And mine was like the search-
ing bee —

I found her sweetness all for
me.
God plied him in the mint of
time,

And coined for us a golden day,
And rolled it ringing down
life's way
With love's sweet music in its
chime.

And God unclasped the Book of
Ages,

And laid it open to our sight;
Upon the dimness of its pages,
So long consigned to rayless
night,

He shed the glory of his light.
We read them well, we read them
long,

And ever thrilling did we see
That love ruled all human-
ity,—

The master passion, pure and
strong.

III

To-day my skies are bare and
ashen;

And bend on me without a
beam.

Since love is held the master-pas-
sion,

Its loss must be the pain su-
preme —

And grinning Fate has wrecked
my dream.

But pardon, dear departed Guest,
I will not rant, I will not rail;
For good the grain must feel
the flail;

There are whom love has never
blessed.

I had and have a younger brother,
One whom I loved and love to-
day

As never fond and doting mother
Adored the babe who found its
way

From heavenly scenes into her
day.

Oh, he was full of youth's new
wine,—

A man on life's ascending slope,
Flushed with ambition, full of
hope;

And every wish of his was mine.

A kingly youth; the way before
him

Was thronged with victories to
be won;

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

So joyous, too, the heavens o'er
him

Were bright with an unchang-
ing sun,—

His days with rhyme were over-
run.

Toil had not taught him Nature's
prose,

Tears had not dimmed his bril-
liant eyes,

And sorrow had not made him
wise;

His life was in the budding rose.

I know not how I came to
waken,

Some instinct pricked my soul
to sight;

My heart by some vague thrill
was shaken,—

A thrill so true and yet so
slight,

I hardly deemed I read aright.

As when a sleeper, ign'rant why,
Not knowing what mysterious
hand

Has called him out of slumber-
land,

Starts up to find some danger
nigh.

Love is a guest that comes, un-
bidden,

But, having come, asserts his
right;

He will not be repressed nor hid-
den.

And so my brother's dawning
plight

Became uncovered to my sight.
Some sound-mote in his passing
tone

Caught in the meshes of my
ear;

Some little glance, a shade too
dear,

Betrayed the love he bore Ione.

What could I do? He was my
brother,

And young, and full of hope
and trust;

I could not, dared not try to
smother

His flame, and turn his heart to
dust.

I knew how oft life gives a
crust

To starving men who cry for
bread;

But he was young, so few his
days,

He had not learned the great
world's ways,

Nor Disappointment's volumes
read.

However fair and rich the booty,

I could not make his loss my
gain.

For love is dear, but dearer
duty,

And here my way was clear and
plain.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

I saw how I could save him pain.
And so, with all my day grown
dim,

That this loved brother's sun
might shine,

I joined his suit, gave over
mine,

And sought Ione, to plead for him.

I found her in an eastern bower,
Where all day long the am'rous
sun

Lay by to woo a timid flower.

This day his course was well-
nigh run,

But still with lingering art he
spun

Gold fancies on the shadowed
wall.

The vines waved soft and green
above,

And there where one might tell
his love,

I told my griefs — I told her all!

I told her all, and as she heark-
ened,

A tear-drop fell upon her dress.

With grief her flushing brow was
darkened;

One sob that she could not re-
press

Betrayed the depths of her dis-
tress.

Upon her grief my sorrow fed,

And I was bowed with unlived
years,

My heart swelled with a sea of
tears,

The tears my manhood could not
shed.

The world is Rome, and Fate is
Nero,

Disporting in the hour of
doom.

God made us men; times make the
hero —

But in that awful space of
gloom

I gave no thought but sorrow's
room.

All — all was dim within that
bower,

What time the sun divorced the
day;

And all the shadows, glooming
gray,

Proclaimed the sadness of the
hour.

She could not speak — no word
was needed;

Her look, half strength and half
despair,

Told me I had not vainly pleaded,
That she would not ignore my
prayer.

And so she turned and left me
there,

And as she went, so passed my
bliss;

She loved me, I could not mis-
take —

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

But for her own and my love's
sake,

Her womanhood could rise to
this!

My wounded heart fled swift to
cover,

And life at times seemed very
dear.

My brother proved an ardent
lover —

What had so young a man to
fear?

He wed Ione within the year.
No shadow clouds her tranquil
brow,

Men speak her husband's name
with pride,

While she sits honored at his
side —

She is — she must be happy now!

I doubt the course I took no
longer,

Since those I love seem satisfied.
The bond between them will grow
stronger

As they go forward side by
side;

Then will my pains be jus-
fied.

Their joy is mine, and that is
best —

I am not totally bereft;

For I have still the mem'ry
left —

Love stopped with me — a Royal
Guest!

RELIGION

I AM no priest of crooks nor
creeds,

For human wants and human
needs

Are more to me than prophets'
deeds;

And human tears and human
cares

Affect me more than human
prayers.

Go, cease your wail, lugubrious
saint!

You fret high Heaven with your
plaint.

Is this the "Christian's joy" you
paint?

Is this the Christian's boasted
bliss?

Avails your faith no more than
this?

Take up your arms, come out with
me,

Let Heav'n alone; humanity
Needs more and Heaven less from
thee.

With pity for mankind look
'round;

Help them to rise — and Heaven
is found.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

DEACON JONES' GRIEV- ANCE

I 'VE been watchin' of 'em, par-
son,

An' I'm sorry fur to say

'At my mind is not contented

With the loose an' keerless
way

'At the young folks treat the mu-
sic;

'T ain't the proper sort o'
choir.

Then I don't believe in Chris-
tuns

A-singin' hymns for hire.

But I never would 'a' mur-
mured

An' the matter might 'a' gone

Ef it was n't fur the antics

'At I've seen 'em kerry on;

So I thought it was my dooty

Fur to come to you an' ask

Ef you would n't sort o' gently

Take them singin' folks to task.

Fust, the music they've be'n
singin'

Will disgrace us mighty soon;

It's a cross between a opy

An' a ol' cotillion tune.

With its dashes an' its quavers

An' its hifalutin style —

Why, it sets my head to swim-
min'

When I'm comin' down the
aisle.

Now it might be almost decent

Ef it was n't fur the way

'At they git up there an' sing it,

Hey dum diddle, loud and gay.

Why, it shames the name o'
sacred

In its brazen wordliness,

An' they've even got "Ol' Hun-
dred"

In a bold, new-fangled dress.

You'll excuse me, Mr. Parson,

Ef I seem a little sore;

But I've sung the songs of Isr'el

For threescore years an' more,

An' it sort o' hurts my feelin's

Fur to see 'em put away

Fur these harum-scarum ditties

'At is capturin' the day.

There's anuther little happ'nin'

'At I'll mention while I'm
here,

Jes' to show 'at my objections

All is offered sound and clear.

It was one day they was singin'

An' was doin' well enough —

Singin' good as people could sing

Sich an awful mess o' stuff —

When the choir give a holler,

An' the organ give a groan,

An' they left one weak-voiced fel-
ler

A-singin' there alone!

But he stuck right to the music,

Tho' 't was tryin' as could
be;

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

An' when I tried to help him,
Why, the hull church scowled
at me.

You say that 's so-low singin',
Well, I pray the Lord that I
Growed up when folks was
willin'

To sing their hymns so high.
Why, we never had sich doin's
In the good ol' Bethel days,
When the folks was all con-
tented
With the simple songs of
praise.

Now I may have spoke too open,
But 't was too hard to keep
still,
An' I hope you 'll tell the singers
'At I bear 'em no ill-will.
'At they all may git to glory
Is my wish an' my desire,
But they 'll need some extry train-
in'
'Fore they jine the heavenly
choir.

ALICE

Know you, winds that blow your
course
Down the verdant valleys,
That somewhere you must, per-
force,
Kiss the brow of Alice?
When her gentle face you find,
Kiss it softly, naughty wind.

Roses waving fair and sweet
Thro' the garden alleys,
Grow into a glory meet
For the eye of Alice;
Let the wind your offering bear
Of sweet perfume, faint and rare.
Lily holding crystal dew
In your pure white chalice,
Nature kind hath fashioned you
Like the soul of Alice;
It of purest white is wrought,
Filled with gems of crystal
thought.

AFTER THE QUARREL

So we, who've supped the self-
same cup,
To-night must lay our friend-
ship by;
Your wrath has burned your
judgment up,
Hot breath has blown the ashes
high.
You say that you are wronged —
ah, well,
I count that friendship poor,
at best
A bauble, a mere bagatelle,
That cannot stand so slight a
test.

I fain would still have been your
friend,
And talked and laughed and
loved with you;

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

But since it must, why, let it end;
The false but dies, 't is not the
true.

So we are favored, you and I,
Who only want the living
truth.

It was not good to nurse the lie;
'T is well it died in harmless
youth.

I go from you to-night to sleep.
Why, what's the odds? why
should I grieve?

I have no fund of tears to weep
For happenings that undeceive:
The days shall come, the days
shall go

Just as they came and went be-
fore.

The sun shall shine, the streams
shall flow

Though you and I are friends no
more.

And in the volume of my years,
Where all my thoughts and
acts shall be,

The page whereon your name
appears

Shall be forever sealed to me.
Not that I hate you over-much,

'T is less of hate than love de-
fied;

Howe'er, our hands no more shall
touch,

We'll go our ways, the world is
wide.

BEYOND THE YEARS

I

BEYOND the years the answer lies,
Beyond where brood the grieving
skies

And Night drops tears.

Where Faith rod-chastened smiles
to rise

And doff its fears,

And carping Sorrow pines and
dies —

Beyond the years.

II

Beyond the years the prayer for rest
Shall beat no more within the
breast;

The darkness clears,

And Morn perched on the moun-
tain's crest

Her form uprears —

The day that is to come is best,
Beyond the years.

III

Beyond the years the soul shall find
That endless peace for which it
pined,

For light appears,

And to the eyes that still were blind
With blood and tears,

Their sight shall come all uncon-
fined

Beyond the years.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

AFTER A VISIT

I BE'N down in ole Kentucky
Fur a week er two, an' say,
'T wuz ez hard ez breakin' oxen
Fur to tear myse'f away.
Allus argerin' 'bout fren'ship
An' yer hospitality —
Y' ain't no right to talk about it
Tell you be'n down there to see.

See jest how they give you welcome
To the best that 's in the land,
Feel the sort o' grip they give you
When they take you by the hand.
Hear 'em say, "We're glad to
have you,
Better stay a week er two;"
An' the way they treat you makes
you
Feel that ev'ry word is true.

Feed you tell you hear the buttons
Crackin' on yore Sunday vest;
Haul you roun' to see the wonders
Tell you have to cry for rest.
Drink yer health an' pet an' praise
you
Tell you git to feel ez great
Ez the Sheriff o' the county
Er the Gov'ner o' the State.

Wife, she sez I must be crazy
'Cause I go on so, an' Nelse
He 'lows, "Goodness gracious!
daddy,
Cain't you talk about nuthin'
else?"

Well, pleg-gone it, I 'm jes' tickled,
Bein' tickled ain't no sin;
I be'n down in ole Kentucky,
An' I want o' go ag'in.

CURTAIN

VILLAIN shows his indiscretion,
Villain's partner makes confession.
Juvenile, with golden tresses,
Finds her pa and dons long dresses.
Scapegrace comes home money-
laden,
Hero comforts tearful maiden,
Soubrette marries loyal chappie,
Villain skips, and all are happy.

THE SPELLIN'-BEE

I NEVER shall furgit that night
when father hitched up Dob-
bin,
An' all us youngsters clambered in
an' down the road went bob-
bin'
To school where we was kep'
at work in every kind o'
weather,
But where that night a spellin'-
bee was callin' us together.
'Twas one o' Heaven's banner
nights, the stars was all a
glitter,
The moon was shinin' like the
hand o' God had jest then lit
her.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

The ground was white with spot-
less snow, the blast was sort
o' stingin' ;

But underneath our round-about,
you bet our hearts was sing-
in'.

That spellin'-bee had be'n the talk
o' many a precious moment,

The youngsters all was wild to see
jes' what the precious show
meant,

An' we whose years was in their
teens was little less desirous

O' gittin' to the meetin' so 's our
sweethearts could admire us.

So on we went so anxious fur to
satisfy our mission

That father had to box our ears,
to smother our ambition.

But boxin' ears was too short
work to hinder cur arrivin',

He jest turned roun' an' smacked
us all, an' kep' right on
a-drivin'.

Well, soon the schoolhouse hove
in sight, the winders beamin'
brightly ;

The sound o' talkin' reached our
ears, and voices laffin' lightly.

It puffed us up so full an' big 'at
I'll jest bet a dollar,

There wa'n't a feller there but
felt the strain upon his col-
lar.

So down we jumped an' in we
went ez sprightly ez you
make 'em,

But somethin' grabbed us by the
knees an' straight began to
shake 'em.

Fur once within that lighted
room, our feelin's took a
canter,

An' scurried to the zero mark ez
quick ez Tam O'Shanter.

'Cause there was crowds o' peo-
ple there, both sexes an' all
stations ;

It looked like all the town had
come an' brought all their re-
lations.

The first I saw was Nettie Gray,
I thought that girl was
dearer

'N' gold ; an' when I got a chance,
you bet I aidged up near
her.

An' Farmer Dobbs's girl was
there, the one 'at Jim was
sweet on,

An' Cyrus Jones an' Mandy
Smith an' Faith an' Patience
Deaton.

Then Parson Brown an' Lawyer
Jones were present — all at-
tention,

An' piles on piles of other folks
too numerous to mention.

The master rose an' briefly said :
" Good friends, dear brother
Crawford,

To spur the pupils' minds along,
a little prize has offered.

To him who spells the best to-

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

- night — or 't may be 'her' —
 no tellin'—
 He offers ez a jest reward, this
 precious work on spellin'."
- A little blue-backed spellin'-book
 with fancy scarlet trimmin';
 We boys devoured it with our
 eyes — so did the girls an'
 women.
- He held it up where all could see,
 then on the table set it,
 An' ev'ry speller in the house felt
 mortal bound to get it.
- At his command we fell in line,
 prepared to do our dooty,
 Outspell the rest an' set 'em down,
 an' carry home the booty.
- 'T was then the merry times be-
 gan, the blunders, an' the
 laffin',
- The nudges an' the nods an' winks
 an' stale good-natured chaf-
 fin'.
- Ole Uncle Hiram Dane was there,
 the closest man a-livin',
 Whose only bugbear seemed to be
 the dreadful fear o' givin'.
- His beard was long, his hair un-
 cut, his clothes all bare an'
 dingy;
- It was n't 'cause the man was
 pore, but jest so mortal
 stingy;
- An' there he sot by Sally Riggs
 a-smilin' an' a-smirkin',
- An' all his children lef' to home a
 diggin' an' a-workin'.
- A widower he was, an' Sal was
 thinkin' 'at she'd wing him;
 I reckon he was wond'rin' what
 them rings o' hern would
 bring him.
- An' when the spellin'-test com-
 menced, he up an' took his
 station,
- A-spellin' with the best o' them
 to beat the very nation.
- An' when he'd spell some young-
 ster down, he'd turn to look
 at Sally,
- An' say: "The teachin' nowadays
 can't be o' no great vally."
- But true enough the adage says,
 "Pride walks in slipp'ry
 places,"
- Fur soon a thing occurred that
 put a smile on all our faces.
- The laffter jest kep' ripplin' 'roun'
 an' teacher could n't quell it,
 Fur when he give out "charity"
 ole Hiram could n't spell it.
- But laffin' 's ketchin' an' it
 throwed some others off their
 bases,
- An' folks 'u'd miss the very word
 that seemed to fit their cases.
- Why, fickle little Jessie Lee come
 near the house upsettin'
- By puttin' in a double "kay" to
 spell the word "coquettin'."
- An' when it come to Cyrus Jones,
 it tickled me all over —
- Him settin' up to Mandy Smith
 an' got sot down on "lover."

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

But Lawyer Jones of all gone men
did shorely look the gonest,
When he found out that he 'd fur-
got to put the "h" in "hon-
est."

An' Parson Brown, whose ser-
mons were too long fur tol-
eration,

Caused lots o' smiles by missin'
when they give out "con-
densation."

So one by one they giv' it up —
the big words kep' a-landin',

Till me an' Nettie Gray was left,
the only ones a-standin',

An' then my inward strife began
— I guess my mind was
petty —

I did so want that spellin'-book;
but then to spell down Net-
tie

Jest sort o' went ag'in my grain —
I somehow could n't do it,

An' when I git a notion fixed,
I'm great on stickin' to it.

So when they giv' the next word
out — I had n't orter tell
it,

But then 't was all fur Nettie's
sake — I missed so's she
could spell it.

She spelt the word, then looked at
me so lovin'-like an' mello',

I tell you 't sent a hunderd pins
a shootin' through a fello'.

O' course I had to stand the jokes
an' chaffin' of the fello's,

But when they handed her the
book I vow I was n't jealous.

We sung a hymn, an' Parson,
Brown dismissed us like he
orter,

Fur, la! he 'd learned a thing er
two an' made his blessin'
shorter.

'T was late an' cold when we got
out, but Nettie liked cold
weather,

An' so did I, so we agreed we 'd
jest walk home together.

We both wuz silent, fur of words
we nuther had a surplus,

'Till she spoke out quite sudden
like, "You missed that word
on purpose."

Well, I declare it frightened me;
at first I tried denyin',

But Nettie, she jest smiled an'
smiled, she knowed that I
was lyin'.

Sez she: "That book is yourn by
right;" sez I: "It never
could be —

I — I — you — ah —" an' there
I stuck, an' well she under-
stood me.

So we agreed that later on when
age had giv' us tether,

We 'd jine our lots an' settle down
to own that book together.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

KEEP A-PLUGGIN' AWAY

I've a humble little motto
That is homely, though it's
true,—

Keep a-pluggin' away.

It's a thing when I've an object
That I always try to do,—

Keep a-pluggin' away.

When you've rising storms to
quell,

When opposing waters swell,

It will never fail to tell,—

Keep a-pluggin' away.

If the hills are high before
And the paths are hard to climb,

Keep a-pluggin' away.

And remember that successes

Come to him who bides his
time,—

Keep a-pluggin' away.

From the greatest to the least,
None are from the rule released.

Be thou toiler, poet, priest,

Keep a-pluggin' away.

Delve away beneath the surface,
There is treasure farther down,—

Keep a-pluggin' away.

Let the rain come down in tor-
rents,

Let the threat'ning heavens frown,

Keep a-pluggin' away.

When the clouds have rolled
away,

There will come a brighter day
All your labor to repay,—

Keep a-pluggin' away.

There'll be lots of sneers to swal-
low,

There'll be lots of pain to bear,—

Keep a-pluggin' away.

If you've got your eye on heaven,
Some bright day you'll wake up
there,—

Keep a-pluggin' away.

Perseverance still is king;

Time its sure reward will bring;

Work and wait unwearying,—

Keep a-pluggin' away.

NIGHT OF LOVE

THE moon has left the sky, love,

The stars are hiding now,

And frowning on the world, love,

Night bares her sable brow.

The snow is on the ground, love,

And cold and keen the air is.

I'm singing here to you, love;

You're dreaming there in Paris.

But this is Nature's law, love,

Though just it may not seem,

That men should wake to sing,
love,

While maidens sleep and dream.

Them care may not molest, love,

Nor stir them from their slum-
bers,

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Though midnight find the swain,
 love,
Still halting o'er his numbers.

I watch the rosy dawn, love,
 Come stealing up the east,
While all things round rejoice,
 love,
That Night her reign has
 ceased.
The lark will soon be heard, love,
 And on his way be winging;
When Nature's poets wake, love,
 Why should a man be singing?

COLUMBIAN ODE

I

FOUR hundred years ago a tangled
 waste
Lay sleeping on the west At-
 lantic's side;
Their devious ways the Old
 World's millions traced
Content, and loved, and la-
 bored, dared and died,
While students still believed the
 charts they conned,
And revelled in their thriftless
 ignorance,
Nor dreamed of other lands that
 lay beyond
Old Ocean's dense, indefinite
 expanse.

II

But deep within her heart old Na-
 ture knew
That she had once arrayed, at
 Earth's behest,
Another offspring, fine and fair
 to view,—
The chosen suckling of the
 mother's breast.
The child was wrapped in vest-
 ments soft and fine,
Each fold a work of Nature's
 matchless art;
The mother looked on it with love
 divine,
And strained the loved one
 closely to her heart.
And there it lay, and with the
 warmth grew strong
And hearty, by the salt sea
 breezes fanned,
Till Time with mellowing touches
 passed along,
And changed the infant to a
 mighty land.

III

But men knew naught of this, till
 there arose
That mighty mariner, the
 Genoese,
Who dared to try, in spite of fears
 and foes,
The unknown fortunes of un-
 sounded seas.
O noblest of Italia's sons, thy
 bark

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

Went not alone into that shroud-
ing night!

O dauntless darer of the rayless
dark,

The world sailed with thee to
eternal light!

The deer-haunts that with game
were crowded then

To-day are tilled and cultivated
lands;

The schoolhouse tow'rs where
Bruin had his den,

And where the wigwam stood
the chapel stands;

The place that nurtured men of
savage mien

Now teems with men of Na-
ture's noblest types;

Where moved the forest-foliage
banner green,

Now flutters in the breeze the
stars and stripes!

A BORDER BALLAD

OH, I have n't got long to live, for
we all

Die soon, e'en those who live
longest;

And the poorest and weakest are
taking their chance

Along with the richest and
strongest.

So it's heigho for a glass and a
song,

And a bright eye over the table,

And a dog for the hunt when the
game is flush,

And the pick of a gentleman's
stable.

There is Dimmock o' Dune, he
was here yester-night,

But he's rotting to-day on Glen
Arragh;

'Twas the hand o' MacPherson
that gave him the blow,

And the vultures shall feast on
his marrow.

But it's heigho for a brave old
song

And a glass while we are able;

Here's a health to death and an-
other cup

To the bright eye over the table.

I can show a broad back and a
jolly deep chest,

But who argues now on ap-
pearance?

A blow or a thrust or a stumble
at best

May send me to-day to my
clearance.

Then it's heigho for the things I
love,

My mother'll be soon wearing
sable,

But give me my horse and my dog
and my glass,

And a bright eye over the table.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

AN EASY-GOIN' FELLER

THER' ain't no use in all this
 strife,
An' hurryin', pell-mell, right thro'
 life.
I don't believe in goin' too fast
To see what kind o' road you've
 passed.
It ain't no mortal kind o' good,
'N' I would n't hurry ef I could.
I like to jest go joggin' 'long,
To limber up my soul with song;
To stop awhile 'n' chat the men,
'N' drink some cider now an'
 then.
Do' want no boss a-standin' by
To see me work; I allus try
To do my dooty right straight up,
An' earn what fills my plate an'
 cup.
An' ez fur boss, I'll be my own,
I like to jest be let alone,
To plough my strip an' tend my
 bees,
An' do jest like I doggoned please.
My head's all right, an' my
 heart's meller,
But I'm a easy-goin' feller.

A NEGRO LOVE SONG

SEEN my lady home las' night,
 Jump back, honey, jump back.
Hel' huh han' an' 'sque'z it tight,
 Jump back, honey, jump back.
Hyeahd huh sigh a little sigh,

Seen a light gleam f'om huh eye,
An' a smile go flittin' by —
 Jump back, honey, jump back.

Hyeahd de win' blow thoo de
 pine,
 Jump back, honey, jump back.
Mockin'-bird was singin' fine,
 Jump back, honey, jump back.
An' my hea't was beatin' so,
When I reached my lady's do',
Dat I could n't ba' to go —
 Jump back, honey, jump back.

Put my ahm aroun' huh wais',
 Jump back, honey, jump back.
Raised huh lips an' took a tase,
 Jump back, honey, jump back.
Love me, honey, love me true?
Love me well ez I love you?
An' she answe'd, "'Cose I do" —
 Jump back, honey, jump back.

THE DILETTANTE: A MODERN TYPE

HE scribbles some in prose and
 verse,
And now and then he prints it;
He paints a little,— gathers some
Of Nature's gold and mints it.

He plays a little, sings a song,
Acts tragic rôles, or funny;
He does, because his love is strong,
But not, oh, not for money!

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

He studies almost everything
From social art to science;
A thirsty mind, a flowing spring,
Demand and swift compliance.

He looms above the sordid
crowd —
At least through friendly lenses;
While his mamma looks pleased
and proud,
And kindly pays expenses.

BY THE STREAM

By the stream I dream in calm
delight, and watch as in a
glass,

How the clouds like crowds of
snowy-hued and white-robed
maidens pass,

And the water into ripples breaks
and sparkles as it spreads,

Like a host of armored knights
with silver helmets on their
heads.

And I deem the stream an emblem
fit of human life may go,

For I find a mind may sparkle
much and yet but shallows
show,

And a soul may glow with myriad
lights and wondrous mys-
teries,

When it only lies a dormant thing
and mirrors what it sees.

THE COLORED SOLDIERS

If the muse were mine to tempt it
And my feeble voice were
strong,

If my tongue were trained to
measures,

I would sing a stirring song.

I would sing a song heroic

Of those noble sons of Ham,

Of the gallant colored soldiers

Who fought for Uncle Sam!

In the early days you scorned
them,

And with many a flip and flout
Said "These battles are the white
man's,

And the whites will fight them
out."

Up the hills you fought and fal-
tered,

In the vales you strove and bled,
While your ears still heard the
thunder

Of the foes' advancing tread.

Then distress fell on the nation,

And the flag was drooping low;
Should the dust pollute your ban-
ner?

No! the nation shouted, No!
So when War, in savage triumph,
Spread abroad his funeral
pall —

Then you called the colored sol-
diers,

And they answered to your call.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

And like hounds unleashed and
eager

For the life blood of the prey,
Sprung they forth and bore them
bravely

In the thickest of the fray.
And where'er the fight was hot-
test,

Where the bullets fastest fell,
There they pressed unblanched
and fearless
At the very mouth of hell.

Ah, they rallied to the standard
To uphold it by their might;
None were stronger in the labors,
None were braver in the fight.
From the blazing breach of Wag-
ner

To the plains of Olustee,
They were foremost in the fight
Of the battles of the free.

And at Pillow! God have mercy
On the deeds committed there,
And the souls of those poor vic-
tims

Sent to Thee without a prayer.
Let the fulness of Thy pity
O'er the hot wrought spirits
sway

Of the gallant colored soldiers
Who fell fighting on that day!

Yes, the Blacks enjoy their free-
dom,

And they won it dearly, too; No.

For the life blood of their thou-
sands

Did the southern fields bedew.
In the darkness of their bondage,
In the depths of slavery's night,
Their muskets flashed the dawn-
ing,

And they fought their way to
light.

They were comrades then and
brothers,

Are they more or less to-day?
They were good to stop a bullet
And to front the fearful fray.
They were citizens and soldiers,
When rebellion raised its head;
And the traits that made them
worthy, —

Ah ! those virtues are not dead.

They have shared your nightly
vigils,

They have shared your daily
toil ;

And their blood with yours com-
mingling

Has enriched the Southern soil.

They have slept and marched and
suffered

'Neath the same dark skies as

They have met as fierce a foe-
man,

And have been as brave and

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THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

And their deeds shall find a record
In the registry of Fame;
For their blood has cleansed completely
Every blot of Slavery's shame.
So all honor and all glory
To those noble sons of Ham—
The gallant colored soldiers
Who fought for Uncle Sam!

NATURE AND ART

TO MY FRIEND CHARLES BOOTH
NETTLETON

I

THE young queen Nature, ever
sweet and fair,
Once on a time fell upon evil
days.
From hearing oft herself dis-
cussed with praise,
There grew within her heart the
longing rare
To see herself; and every passing
air
The warm desire fanned into
lusty blaze.
Full oft she sought this end by
devious ways,
But sought in vain, so fell she in
despair.
For none within her train nor by
her side
Could solve the task or give the
envied boon.
So day and night, beneath the
sun and moon,

She wandered to and fro unsatis-
fied,
Till Art came by, a blithe in-
ventive elf,
And made a glass wherein she
saw herself.

II

Enrapt, the queen gazed on her
glorious self,
Then trembling with the thrill
of sudden thought,
Commanded that the skilful
weight be brought
That she might dower him with
lands and pelf.
Then out upon the silent sea-lapt
shelf
And up the hills and on the
downs they sought
Him who so well and won-
drously had wrought;
And with much search found and
brought home the elf.
But he put by all gifts with sad
replies,
And from his lips these words
flowed forth like wine:
"O queen, I want no gift but
thee," he said.
She heard and looked on him with
love-lit eyes,
Gave him her hand, low murmur-
ing, "I am thine,"
And at the morrow's dawning
they were wed.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

AFTER WHILE

A POEM OF FAITH

I THINK that though the clouds
be dark,
That though the waves dash o'er
the bark,
Yet after while the light will
come,
And in calm waters safe at home
The bark will anchor.
Weep not, my sad-eyed, gray-
robed maid,
Because your fairest blossoms
fade,
That sorrow still o'erruns your
cup,
And even though you root them
up,
The weeds grow ranker.

For after while your tears shall
cease,
And sorrow shall give way to
peace;
The flowers shall bloom, the
weeds shall die,
And in that faith seen, by and by
Thy woes shall perish.
Smile at old Fortune's adverse
tide,
Smile when the scoffers sneer and
chide.
Oh, not for you the gems that
pale,
And not for you the flowers that
fail;

Let this thought cherish:

That after while the clouds will
part,
And then with joy the waiting
heart
Shall feel the light come stealing
in,
That drives away the cloud of sin
And breaks its power.
And you shall burst your chrysa-
lis,
And wing away to realms of
bliss,
Untrammelled, pure, divinely
free,
Above all earth's anxiety
From that same hour.

THE OL' TUNES

You kin talk about yer anthems
An' yer arias an' sich,
An' yer modern choir-singin'
That you think so awful rich;
But you orter heerd us youngsters
In the times now far away,
A-singin' o' the ol' tunes
In the ol'-fashioned way.

There was some of us sung treble
An' a few of us growled bass,
An' the tide o' song flowed
smoothly
With its 'comp'niment o' grace;
There was spirit in that music,
An' a kind o' solemn sway,
A-singin' o' the ol' tunes
In the ol'-fashioned way.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

I remember oft o' standin'
In my homespun pantaloons —
On my face the bronze an' freckles
O' the suns o' youthful Junes —
Thinkin' that no mortal minstrel
Ever chanted sich a lay
As the ol' tunes we was singin'
In the ol'-fashioned way.

The boys 'ud always lead us,
An' the girls 'ud all chime in
Till the sweetness o' the singin'
Robbed the list'nin' soul o' sin;
An' I used to tell the parson
'T was as good to sing as pray,
When the people sung the ol'
tunes
In the ol'-fashioned way.

How I long ag'in to hear 'em
Pourin' forth from soul to soul,
With the treble high an' meller,
An' the bass's mighty roll;
But the times is very diff'rent,
An' the music heerd to-day
Ain't the singin' o' the ol' tunes
In the ol'-fashioned way.

Little screechin' by a woman,
Little squawkin' by a man,
Then the organ's twiddle-twaddle,
Jest the empty space to span, —
An' ef you should even think it,
'T is n't proper fur to say
That you want to hear the ol'
tunes
In the ol'-fashioned way.

But I think that some bright
mornin',
When the toils of life air o'er,
An' the sun o' heaven arisin'
Glads with light the happy
shore,
I shall hear the angel chorus,
In the realms of endless day,
A-singin' o' the ol' tunes
In the ol'-fashioned way.

MELANCHOLIA

SILENTLY without my window,
Tapping gently at the pane,
Falls the rain.
Through the trees sighs the breeze
Like a soul in pain.
Here alone I sit and weep;
Thought hath banished sleep.
Wearily I sit and listen
To the water's ceaseless drip.
To my lip
Fate turns up the bitter cup,
Forcing me to sip;
'T is a bitter, bitter drink,
Thus I sit and think, —
Thinking things unknown and
awful,
Thoughts on wild, uncanny
themes,
Waking dreams.
Spectres dark, corpses stark,
Show the gaping seams
Whence the cold and cruel knife
Stole away their life,

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Bloodshot eyes all strained and
staring,

Gazing ghastly into mine;
Blood like wine

On the brow — clotted now—

Shows death's dreadful sign.

Lonely vigil still I keep;

Would that I might sleep!

Still, oh, still, my brain is whirl-
ing!

Still runs on my stream of
thought;

I am caught

In the net fate hath set.

Mind and soul are brought

To destruction's very brink;

Yet I can but think!

Eyes that look into the future,—

Peeping forth from out my
mind,

They will find

Some new weight, soon or late,

On my soul to bind,

Crushing all its courage out,—

Heavier than doubt.

Dawn, the Eastern monarch's
daughter,

Rising from her dewy bed,

Lays her head

'Gainst the clouds' sombre
shrouds

Now half fringed with red.

O'er the land she 'gins to peep;

Come, O gentle Sleep!

Hark! the morning cock is crow-
ing;

Dreams, like ghosts, must hie
away;

'Tis the day.

Rosy morn now is born;

Dark thoughts may not stay.

Day my brain from foes will keep;

Now, my soul, I sleep.

THE WOOING

A YOUTH went faring up and
down,

Alack and well-a-day.

He fared him to the market town,

Alack and well-a-day.

And there he met a maiden fair,

With hazel eyes and auburn hair;

His heart went from him then and
there,

Alack and well-a-day.

She posies sold right merrily,

Alack and well-a-day;

But not a flower was fair as she,

Alack and well-a-day.

He bought a rose and sighed a
sigh,

"Ah, dearest maiden, would that I
Might dare the seller too to buy!"

Alack and well-a-day.

She tossed her head, the coy co-
quette,

Alack and well-a-day.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

"I'm not, sir, in the market yet,"
Alack and well-a-day.
"Your love must cool upon a
shelf;
Tho' much I sell for gold and
pelf,
I'm yet too young to sell myself,"
Alack and well-a-day.

The youth was filled with sorrow
sore,
Alack and well-a-day.
And looked he at the maid once
more,
Alack and well-a-day.
Then loud he cried, "Fair maid-
en, if
Too young to sell, now as I live,
You're not too young yourself to
give,"
Alack and well-a-day.

The little maid cast down her
eyes,
Alack and well-a-day.
And many a flush began to rise,
Alack and well-a-day.
"Why, since you are so bold," she
said,
"I doubt not you are highly bred,
So take me!" and the twain were
wed,
Alack and well-a-day.

MERRY AUTUMN

It's all a farce,—these tales they
tell

About the breezes sighing,
And moans astir o'er field and
dell,

Because the year is dying:

Such principles are most absurd,—
I care not who first taught
'em;

There's nothing known to beast
or bird

To make a solemn autumn.

In solemn times, when grief holds
sway

With countenance distressing,
You'll note the more of black and
gray

Will then be used in dressing.

Now purple tints are all around;
The sky is blue and mellow;
And e'en the grasses turn the
ground

From modest green to yellow.

The seed burrs all with laughter
crack

On featherweed and jimson;
And leaves that should be dressed
in black

Are all decked out in crimson.

A butterfly goes winging by;
A singing bird comes after;

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

And Nature, all from earth to
sky,
Is bubbling o'er with laughter.

The ripples wimple on the rills,
Like sparkling little lasses;
The sunlight runs along the hills,
And laughs among the grasses.

The earth is just so full of fun
It really can't contain it;
And streams of mirth so freely
run
The heavens seem to rain it.

Don't talk to me of solemn days
In autumn's time of splendor,
Because the sun shows fewer rays,
And these grow slant and slender.

Why, it's the climax of the
year, —

The highest time of living! —
Till naturally its bursting cheer
Just melts into thanksgiving.

WHEN DE CO'N PONE'S HOT

DEY is times in life when Nature
Seems to slip a cog an' go,
Jes' a-rattlin' down creation,
Lak an ocean's overflow;
When de worl' jes' stahts a-spin-
nin'
Lak a picaninny's top,

An' yo' cup o' joy is brimmin'
'Twell it seems about to slop,
An' you feel jes' lak a racah,
Dat is trainin' fu' to trot —
When yo' mammy says de blessin'
An' de co'n pone's hot.

When you set down at de table,
Kin' o' weary lak an' sad,
An' you 'se jes' a little tiahed
An' purhaps a little mad;
How yo' gloom tu'ns into glad-
ness,

How yo' joy drives out de
doubt

When de oven do' is opened,
An' de smell comes po'in' out;
Why, de 'lectric light o' Heaven
Seems to settle on de spot,
When yo' mammy says de blessin'
An' de co'n pone's hot.

When de cabbage pot is steamin'
An' de bacon good an' fat,
When de chittlins is a-sputter'n'
So's to show you whah dey's
at;

Tek away yo' sody biscuit,
Tek away yo' cake an' pie,
Fu' de glory time is comin',
An' it's 'proachin' mighty
nigh,

An' you want to jump an' hollah,
Dough you know you'd bettah
not,

When yo' mammy says de blessin'
An' de co'n pone's hot.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

I have hyeahd o' lots o' sermons,
An' I've hyeahd o' lots o'
prayers,
An' I've listened to some singin'
Dat has tuck me up de stairs
Of de Glory-Lan' an' set me
Jes' below de Mastah's th'one,
An' have lef' my hea't a-singin'
In a happy aftah tone;
But dem wu'ds so sweetly mur-
mured
Seem to tech de softes' spot,
When my mammy says de blessin',
An' de co'n pone's hot.

BALLAD

I KNOW my love is true,
And oh the day is fair.
The sky is clear and blue,
The flowers are rich of hue,
The air I breathe is rare,
I have no grief or care;
For my own love is true,
And oh the day is fair.

My love is false I find,
And oh the day is dark.
Blows sadly down the wind,
While sorrow holds my mind;
I do not hear the lark,
For quenched is life's dear
spark,—
My love is false I find,
And oh the day is dark!

For love doth make the day
Or dark or doubly bright;
Her beams along the way
Dispel the gloom and gray.
She lives and all is bright,
She dies and life is night.
For love doth make the day,
Or dark or doubly bright.

THE CHANGE HAS COME

THE change has come, and Helen
sleeps —
Not sleeps; but wakes to greater
deeps
Of wisdom, glory, truth, and
light,
Than ever blessed her seeking
sight,
In this low, long, lethargic
night,
Worn out with strife
Which men call life.

The change has come, and who
would say
"I would it were not come to-
day"?
What were the respite till to-
morrow?
Postponement of a certain sor-
row,
From which each passing day
would borrow!
Let grief be dumb,
The change has come,

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

COMPARISON

THE sky of brightest gray seems
dark

To one whose sky was ever
white.

To one who never knew a spark,
Thro' all his life, of love or
light,

The grayest cloud seems over-
bright.

The robin sounds a beggar's note
Where one the nightingale has
heard,

But he for whom no silver throat
Its liquid music ever stirred,
Deems robin still the sweetest
bird.

A CORN-SONG

ON the wide veranda white,
In the purple failing light,
Sits the master while the sun is
lowly burning;

And his dreamy thoughts are
drowned

In the softly flowing sound
Of the corn-songs of the field-
hands slow returning.

Oh, we hoe de co'n
Since de ehly mo'n;
Now de sinkin' sun
Says de day is done.

O'er the fields with heavy tread,
Light of heart and high of head,

Though the halting steps be la-
bored, slow, and weary;
Still the spirits brave and strong
Find a comforter in song,
And their corn-song rises ever
loud and cheery.

Oh, we hoe de co'n
Since de ehly mo'n;
Now de sinkin' sun
Says de day is done.

To the master in his seat,
Comes the burden, full and sweet,
Of the mellow minor music grow-
ing clearer,
As the toilers raise the hymn,
Thro' the silence dusk and dim,
To the cabin's restful shelter
drawing nearer.

Oh, we hoe de co'n
Since de ehly mo'n;
Now de sinkin' sun
Says de day is done.

And a tear is in the eye
Of the master sitting by,
As he listens to the echoes low-
replying
To the music's fading calls
As it faints away and falls
Into silence, deep within the cabin
dying.

Oh, we hoe de co'n
Since de ehly mo'n;
Now de sinkin' sun
Says de day is done.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

DISCOVERED

SEEN you down at chu'ch las'
night,

Nevah min', Miss Lucy.

What I mean? oh, dat's all right,

Nevah min', Miss Lucy.

You was sma't ez sma't could be,

But you could n't hide f'om me.

Ain't I got two eyes to see!

Nevah min', Miss Lucy.

Guess you thought you's awful
keen;

Nevah min', Miss Lucy.

Evahting you done, I seen;

Nevah min', Miss Lucy.

Seen him tek yo' ahm jes' so,

When he got outside de do' —

Oh, I know dat man's yo' beau!

Nevah min', Miss Lucy.

Say now, honey, wha'd he say? —

Nevah min', Miss Lucy!

Keep yo' secrets — dat's yo'
way —

Nevah min', Miss Lucy.

Won't tell me an' I'm yo' pal —

I'm gwine tell his othah gal, —

Know huh, too, huh name is Sal;

Nevah min', Miss Lucy!

DISAPPOINTED

AN old man planted and dug and
tended,

Toiling in joy from dew to
dew;

The sun was kind, and the rain
befriended;

Fine grew his orchard and fair
to view.

Then he said: "I will quiet my
thrifty fears,

For here is fruit for my failing
years."

But even then the storm-clouds
gathered,

Swallowing up the azure sky;

The sweeping winds into white
foam lathered

The placid breast of the bay,
hard by;

Then the spirits that raged in the
darkened air

Swept o'er his orchard and left it
bare.

The old man stood in the rain, un-
caring,

Viewing the place the storm had
swept;

And then with a cry from his soul
despairing,

He bowed him down to the
earth and wept.

But a voice cried aloud from the
driving rain;

"Arise, old man, and plant
again!"

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

INVITATION TO LOVE

COME when the nights are bright
with stars

Or when the moon is mellow;
Come when the sun his golden
bars

Drops on the hay-field yellow.
Come in the twilight soft and
gray,

Come in the night or come in the
day,

Come, O love, whene'er you may,
And you are welcome, welcome.

You are sweet, O Love, dear
Love,

You are soft as the nesting dove.
Come to my heart and bring it rest
As the bird flies home to its wel-
come nest.

Come when my heart is full of
grief

Or when my heart is merry;
Come with the falling of the leaf
Or with the redd'ning cherry.

Come when the year's first blos-
som blows,

Come when the summer gleams
and glows,

Come with the winter's drifting
snows,

And you are welcome, welcome.

HE HAD HIS DREAM

HE had his dream, and all
through life,

Worked up to it through toil and
strife.

Afloat fore'er before his eyes,
It colored for him all his skies;

The storm-cloud dark
Above his bark,

The calm and listless vault of blue
Took on its hopeful hue,

It tintured every passing beam —
He had his dream.

He labored hard and failed at last,
His sails too weak to bear the
blast,

The raging tempests tore away
And sent his beating bark astray.
But what cared he
For wind or sea!

He said, "The tempest will be
short,

My bark will come to port."

He saw through every cloud a
gleam —

He had his dream.

GOOD-NIGHT

THE lark is silent in his nest,
The breeze is sighing in its
flight,

Sleep, Love, and peaceful be thy
rest.

Good-night, my love, good-
night, good-night.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

Sweet dreams attend thee in thy 'T ain't no possum! Bless de
sleep, Lamb!
To soothe thy rest till morn- Yes, it is, you rascal, Sam!
ing's light,
And angels round thee vigil keep. Gin it to me; whut you say?
Good-night, my love, good- Ain't you sma't now! Oh, go
night, good-night. 'way!
Possum do look mighty nice,
Sleep well, my love, on night's But you ax too big a price.
dark breast,
And ease thy soul with slumber
bright;
Be joy but thine and I am blest. Tell me, is you talkin' true,
Good-night, my love, good- Dat's de gal's whut ma'ies you?
night, good-night. Come back, Sam; now whah's
you gwine?
Co'se you knows dat possum's
mine!

A COQUETTE CON- QUERED

YES, my ha't 's ez ha'd ez stone —
Go 'way, Sam, an' lemme 'lone.
No; I ain't gwine change my
min' —
Ain't gwine ma'y you — nuffin' de
kin'.

Phiny loves you true an' deah?
Go ma'y Phiny; whut I keer?
Oh, you need n't mou'n an' cry —
I don't keer how soon you die.

Got a present! Whut you got?
Somef'n fu' de pan er pot!
Huh! yo' sass do sholy beat —
Think I don't git 'nough to eat?

Whut's dat un'neaf yo' coat?
Looks des lak a little shoat.

NORA: A SERENADE

AH, Nora, my Nora, the light
fades away,
While Night like a spirit steals
up o'er the hills;
The thrush from his tree where he
chanted all day,
No longer his music in ecstasy
trills.
Then, Nora, be near me; thy pres-
ence doth cheer me,
Thine eye hath a gleam that is
truer than gold.

I cannot but love thee; so do not
reprove me,
If the strength of my passion
should make me too bold.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Nora, pride of my heart —
Rosy cheeks, cherry lips, sparkling with glee,—
Wake from thy slumbers, wherever thou art;
Wake from thy slumbers to me.

Ah, Nora, my Nora, there's love in the air,—
It stirs in the numbers that thrill in my brain;
Oh, sweet, sweet is love with its mingling of care,
Though joy travels only a step before pain.
Be roused from thy slumbers and list to my numbers;
My heart is poured out in this song unto thee.
Oh, be thou not cruel, thou treasure, thou jewel;
Turn thine ear to my pleading and hearken to me.

OCTOBER

OCTOBER is the treasurer of the year,
And all the months pay bounty to her store;
The fields and orchards still their tribute bear,
And fill her brimming coffers more and more.
But she, with youthful lavishness,

Spends all her wealth in gaudy dress,
And decks herself in garments bold
Of scarlet, purple, red, and gold.

She heedeth not how swift the hours fly,
But smiles and sings her happy life along;
She only sees above a shining sky;
She only hears the breezes' voice in song.
Her garments trail the woodlands through,
And gather pearls of early dew
That sparkle, till the roguish Sun
Creeps up and steals them every one.

But what cares she that jewels should be lost,
When all of Nature's bounteous wealth is hers?
Though princely fortunes may have been their cost,
Not one regret her calm demeanor stirs.
Whole-hearted, happy, careless, free,
She lives her life out joyously,
Nor cares when Frost stalks o'er her way
And turns her auburn locks to gray.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

A SUMMER'S NIGHT

THE night is dewy as a maiden's
mouth,
The skies are bright as are a
maiden's eyes,
Soft as a maiden's breath the
wind that flies
Up from the perfumed bosom of
the South.
Like sentinels, the pines stand in
the park;
And hither hastening, like rakes
that roam,
With lamps to light their way-
ward footsteps home,
The fireflies come stagg'ring down
the dark.

SHIPS THAT PASS IN THE NIGHT

OUT in the sky the great dark
clouds are massing;
I look far out into the pregnant
night,
Where I can hear a solemn boom-
ing gun
And catch the gleaming of a
random light,
That tells me that the ship I seek
is passing, passing.
My tearful eyes my soul's deep
hurt are glassing;
For I would hail and check that
ship of ships.

I stretch my hands imploring, cry
aloud,
My voice falls dead a foot from
mine own lips,
And but its ghost doth reach that
vessel, passing, passing.

O Earth, O Sky, O Ocean, both
surpassing,
O heart of mine, O soul that
dreads the dark!
Is there no hope for me? Is there
no way
That I may sight and check that
speeding bark
Which out of sight and sound is
passing, passing?

THE DELINQUENT

GOO'-BY, Jinks, I got to hump,
Got to mek dis pony jump;
See dat sun a-goin' down
'N' me a-foolin' hyeah in town!
Git up, Suke — go long!

Guess Mirandy 'll think I's tight,
Me not home an' comin' on night.
What's dat stan'in' by de fence?
Pshaw! why don't I lu'n some
sense?
Git up, Suke — go long!

Guess I spent down dah at Jinks'
Mos' a dollah fur de drinks.
Bless yo'r soul, you see dat star?
Lawd, but won't Mirandy rar?
Git up, Suke — go long!

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Went dis mo'nin', hyeah it 's night,
Dah 's de cabin dah in sight.
Who 's dat stan'in' in de do'?
Dat must be Mirandy, sho',
Git up, Suke — go long!

Got de close-stick in huh han',
Dat look funny, goodness lan',
Sakes alibe, but she look glum!
Hyeah, Mirandy, hyeah I come!
Git up, Suke — go long!

Ef 't had n't a' b'en fur you, you
slow ole fool, I 'd a' be'n home
long fo' now!

DAWN

AN angel, robed in spotless white,
Bent down and kissed the sleeping
Night.

Night woke to blush; the sprite
was gone.

Men saw the blush and called it
Dawn.

A DROWSY DAY

THE air is dark, the sky is gray,
The misty shadows come and
go,

And here within my dusky room
Each chair looks ghostly in the
gloom.

Outside the rain falls cold and
slow —

Half-stinging drops, half-blinding
spray.

Each slightest sound is magnified,
For drowsy quiet holds her
reign;

The burnt stick in the fireplace
breaks,

The nodding cat with start
awakes,

And 'then to sleep drops off
again,

Unheeding Towser at her side.

I look far out across the lawn,
Where huddled stand the silly
sheep;

My work lies idle at my hands,
My thoughts fly out like scattered
strands

Of thread, and on the verge of
sleep —

Still half awake — I dream and
yawn.

What spirits rise before my eyes!
How various of kind and form!

Sweet memories of days long past,
The dreams of youth that could
not last,

Each smiling calm, each raging
storm,

That swept across my early skies.

Half seen, the bare, gaunt-fingered
boughs

Before my window sweep and
sway,

And chafe in tortures of unrest.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

My chin sinks down upon my
breast;

I cannot work on such a day,
But only sit and dream and
drowse.

DIRGE

PLACE this bunch of mignonette
In her cold, dead hand;
When the golden sun is set,
Where the poplars stand,
Bury her from sun and day,
Lay my little love away
From my sight.

She was like a modest flower
Blown in sunny June,
Warm as sun at noon's high hour,
Chaster than the moon.
Ah, her day was brief and bright,
Earth has lost a star of light;
She is dead.

Softly breathe her name to me,—
Ah, I loved her so.
Gentle let your tribute be;
None may better know
Her true worth than I who weep
O'er her as she lies asleep —
'Soft asleep.

Lay these lilies on her breast,
They are not more white
Than the soul of her, at rest
'Neath their petals bright.
Chant your aves soft and low,

Solemn be your tread and slow,—
She is dead.

Lay her here beneath the grass,
Cool and green and sweet,
Where the gentle brook may pass
Crooning at her feet.
Nature's bards shall come and
sing,
And the fairest flowers shall spring
Where she lies.

Safe above the water's swirl,
She has crossed the bar;
Earth has lost a precious pearl,
Heaven has gained a star,
That shall ever sing and shine,
Till it quells this grief of mine
For my love.

HYMN

WHEN storms arise
And dark'ning skies
About me threat'ning lower,
To thee, O Lord, I raise mine
eyes,
To thee my tortured spirit flies
For solace in that hour.

The mighty arm
Will let no harm
Come near me nor befall me;
Thy voice shall quiet my alarm,
When life's great battle waxeth
warm —
No foeman shall appall me.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Upon thy breast
Secure I rest,
From sorrow and vexation;
No more by sinful cares oppressed,
But in thy presence ever blest,
O God of my salvation.

PREPARATION

THE little bird sits in the nest and
sings
A shy, soft song to the morning
light;
And it flutters a little and prunes
its wings.
The song is halting and poor
and brief,
And the fluttering wings scarce
stir a leaf;
But the note is a prelude to
sweeter things,
And the busy bill and the flutter
slight
Are proving the wings for a
bolder flight!

THE DESERTED PLAN- TATION

OH, de grubbin'-hoe's a-rustin' in
de co'nah,
An' de plow's a-tumblin' down
in de fiel',
While de whippo'will's a-wailin'
lak a mou'nah
When his stubbo'n hea't is try-
in' ha'd to yiel'.

In de furrers whah de co'n was
allus wavin',
Now de weeds is growin' green
an' rank an' tall;
An' de swallers roun' de whole
place is a-bravin'
Lak dey thought deir folks had
allus owned it all.

An' de big house stan's all quiet
lak an' solemn,
Not a blessed soul in pa'lor,
po'ch, er lawn;
Not a guest, ner not a ca'iage lef'
to haul 'em,
Fu' de ones dat tu'ned de latch-
string out air gone.
An' de banjo's voice is silent in de
qua'ters,
D' ain't a hymn ner co'n-song
ringin' in de air;
But de murmur of a branch's pass-
in' waters
Is de only soun' dat breks de
stillness dere.

Whah's de da'kies, dem dat used
to be a-dancin'
Evry night befo' de ole cabin
do'?
Whah's de chillun, dem dat used
to be a-prancin'
Er a-rollin' in de san' er on de
flo'?

Whah's ole Uncle Mordecai an'
Uncle Aaron?

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

Whah 's Aunt Doshy, Sam, an'
Kit, an' all de res'?

Whah 's ole Tom de da'ky fiddlah,
how 's he farin'?

Whah 's de gals dat used to sing
an' dance de bes'?

Gone! not one o' dem is lef' to tell
de story;

Dey have lef' de deah ole place
to fall away.

Could n't one o' dem dat seed it in
its glory

Stay to watch it in de hour of
decay?

Dey have lef' de ole plantation to
de swallers,

But it hol's in me a lover till de
las';

Fu' I fin' hyeah in de memory dat
follers

All dat loved me an' dat I loved
in de pas'.

So I 'll stay an' watch de deah ole
place an' tend it

Ez I used to in de happy days
gone by.

'Twell de othah Mastah thinks
it's time to end it,

An' calls me to my qua'ters in
de sky.

THE SECRET

WHAT says the wind to the way-
ing trees?

What says the wave to the
river?

What means the sigh in the passing
breeze?

Why do the rushes quiver?

Have you not heard the fainting
cry

Of the flowers that said "Good-
bye, good-bye"?

List how the gray dove moans and
grieves

Under the woodland cover;

List to the drift of the falling
leaves,

List to the wail of the lover.

Have you not caught the message
heard

Already by wave and breeze and
bird?

Come, come away to the river's
bank,

Come in the early morning;

Come when the grass with dew is
dank,

There you will find the warn-
ing—

A hint in the kiss of the quicken-
ing air

Of the secret that birds and
breezes bear.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

THE WIND AND THE SEA

I stood by the shore at the death
of day,
As the sun sank flaming red;
And the face of the waters that
spread away
Was as gray as the face of the
dead.

And I heard the cry of the wan-
ton sea
And the moan of the wailing
wind;
For love's sweet pain in his heart
had he,
But the gray old sea had sinned.

The wind was young and the sea
was old,
But their cries went up to-
gether;
The wind was warm and the sea
was cold,
For age makes wintry weather.

So they cried aloud and they wept
amain,
Till the sky grew dark to hear
it;
And out of its folds crept the misty
rain,
In its shroud, like a troubled
spirit.

For the wind was wild with a
hopeless love,
And the sea was sad at heart

At many a crime that he wot of,
Wherein he had played his part.

He thought of the gallant ships
gone down
By the will of his wicked waves;
And he thought how the church-
yard in the town
Held the sea-made widows'
graves.

The wild wind thought of the love
he had left
Afar in an Eastern land,
And he longed, as long the much
bereft,
For the touch of her perfumed
hand.

In his winding wail and his deep-
heaved sigh
His aching grief found vent;
While the sea looked up at the
bending sky
And murmured: "I repent."

But e'en as he spoke, a ship came
by,
That bravely ploughed the
main,
And a light came into the sea's
green eye,
And his heart grew hard again.

Then he spoke to the wind:
"Friend, seest thou not
Yon vessel is eastward bound?
Pray speed with it to the happy
spot

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

Where thy loved one may be
found."

And the wind rose up in a dear
delight,

And after the good ship sped;
But the crafty sea by his wicked
might
Kept the vessel ever ahead.

Till the wind grew fierce in his
despair,

And white on the brow and lip.
He tore his garments and tore his
hair,
And fell on the flying ship.

And the ship went down, for a
rock was there,

And the sailless sea loomed
black;

While burdened again with dole
and care,

The wind came moaning back.

And still he moans from his bosom
hot

Where his raging grief lies pent,
And ever when the ships come not,
The sea says: "I repent."

RIDING TO TOWN

WHEN labor is light and the
morning is fair,

I find it a pleasure beyond all
compare

To hitch up my nag and go hur-
rying down

And take Katie May for a ride
into town;

For bumpety-bump goes the
wagon,

But tra-la-la-la our lay.

There's joy in a song as we rattle
along

In the light of the glorious day.

A coach would be fine, but a
spring wagon's good;

My jeans are a match for Kate's
gingham and hood;

The hills take us up and the vales
take us down,

But what matters that? we are
riding to town,

And bumpety-bump goes the
wagon,

But tra-la-la-la sing we.

There's never a care may live in
the air

That is filled with the breath
of our glee.

And after we've started, there's
naught can repress

The thrill of our hearts in their
wild happiness;

The heavens may smile or the
heavens may frown,

And it's all one to us when we're
riding to town.

For bumpety-bump goes the
wagon,

But tra-la-la-la we shout,

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

For our hearts they are clear and
there's nothing to fear,
And we've never a pain nor a
doubt.

The wagon is weak and the road-
way is rough,
And tho' it is long it is not long
enough,
For mid all my ecstasies this is the
crown
To sit beside Katie and ride into
town,

When bumpety-bump goes the
wagon,
But tra-la-la-la our song;
And if I had my way, I'd be will-
ing to pay
If the road could be made twice
as long.

WE WEAR THE MASK

WE wear the mask that grins and
lies,
It hides our cheeks and shades our
eyes,—
This debt we pay to human guile;
With torn and bleeding hearts we
smile,
And mouth with myriad subtle-
ties.

Why should the world be over-
wise,
In counting all our tears and
sighs?

Nay, let them only see us, while
We wear the mask.

We smile, but, O great Christ,
our cries
To thee from tortured souls arise.
We sing, but oh the clay is vile
Beneath our feet, and long the
mile;
But let the world dream other-
wise,
We wear the mask!

THE MEADOW LARK

THOUGH the winds be dank,
And the sky be sober,
And the grieving Day
In a mantle gray
Hath let her waiting maiden
robe her,—
All the fields along
I can hear the song
Of the meadow lark,
As she flits and flutters,
And laughs at the thunder
when it mutters.
O happy bird, of heart most
gay
To sing when skies are gray!

When the clouds are full,
And the tempest master
Lets the loud winds sweep
From his bosom deep
Like heralds of some dire disas-
ter,

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

Then the heart alone
To itself makes moan;
And the songs come slow,
While the tears fall fleeter,
And silence than song by far
seems sweeter.
Oh, few are they along the
way
Who sing when skies are
gray!

ONE LIFE

OH, I am hurt to death, my
Love;
The shafts of Fate have pierced
my striving heart,
And I am sick and weary of
The endless pain and smart.
My soul is weary of the strife,
And chafes at life, and chafes at
life.
Time mocks me with fair prom-
ises;
A blooming future grows a bar-
ren past,
Like rain my fair full-blossomed
trees
Unburden in the blast.
The harvest fails on grain and
tree,
Nor comes to me, nor comes to
me.

The stream that bears my hopes
abreast

Turns ever from my way its
pregnant tide.
My laden boat, torn from its rest,
Drifts to the other side.
So all my hopes are set astray,
And drift away, and drift away.

The lark sings to me at the morn,
And near me wings her sky-
ward-soaring flight;
But pleasure dies as soon as born,
The owl takes up the night,
And night seems long and doubly
dark;
I miss the lark, I miss the lark.

Let others labor as they may,
I'll sing and sigh alone, and
write my line.
Their fate is theirs, or grave or
gay,
And mine shall still be mine.
I know the world holds joy and
glee,
But not for me,—'t is not for me.

CHANGING TIME

THE cloud looked in at the win-
dow,
And said to the day, "Be dark!"
And the roguish rain tapped hard
on the pane,
To stifle the song of the lark.

The wind sprang up in the tree
tops

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

And shrieked with a voice of
death,
But the rough-voiced breeze, that
shook the trees,
Was touched with a violet's
breath.

DEAD

A KNOCK is at her door, but she
is weak;
Strange dews have washed the
paint streaks from her
cheek;
She does not rise, but, ah, this
friend is known,
And knows that he will find her
all alone.
So opens he the door, and with
soft tread
Goes straightway to the richly
curtained bed.
His soft hand on her dewy head
he lays.
A strange white light she gives
him for his gaze.
Then, looking on the glory of her
charms,
He crushes her resistless in his
arms.
Stand back! look not upon this
bold embrace,
Nor view the calmness of the
wanton's face;
With joy unspeakable and 'bated
breath,

She keeps her last, long liaison
with death!

A CONFIDENCE

UNCLE JOHN, he makes me tired;
Thinks 'at he's jest so all-fired
Smart, 'at he kin pick up, so,
Ever'thing he wants to know.
Tried to ketch me up last night,
But you bet I would n't bite.
I jest kep' the smoothes' face,
But I led him sich a chase,
Could n't corner me, you bet—
I skipped all the traps he set.
Makin' out he wan'ed to know
Who was this an' that girl's beau;
So 's he 'd find out, don't you see,
Who was goin' 'long with me.
But I answers jest ez sly,
An' I never winks my eye,
Tell he hollers with a whirl,
"Look here, ain't you got a girl?"
Y' ought 'o seen me spread my
eyes,
Like he 'd took me by surprise,
An' I said, "Oh, Uncle John,
Never thought o' havin' one."
An' somehow that seemed to tickle
Him an' he shelled out a nickel.
Then you ought to seen me leave
Jest a-laffin' in my sleeve.
Fool him—well, I guess I did;
He ain't on to this here kid.
Got a girl! well, I guess yes,
Got a dozen more or less,
But I got one reely one,

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

Not no foolin' ner no fun;
 Fur I'm sweet on her, you see,
 An' I ruther guess 'at she
 Must be kinder sweet on me,
 So we're keepin' company.
 Honest Injun! this is true,
 Ever' word I'm tellin' you!
 But you won't be sich a scab
 Ez to run aroun' an' blab.
 Mebbe 't ain't the way with you,
 But you know some fellers do.
 Spoils a girl to let her know
 'At you talk about her so.
 Don't you know her? her name's

Liz,

Nicest girl in town she is.
 Purty? ah, git out, you gilly —
 Liz 'ud purt 'nigh knock you silly.
 Y' ought 'o see her when she's
 dressed

All up in her' Sunday best,
 All the fellers nudgin' me,
 An' a-whisperin', gemunee!
 Betcher life 'at I feel proud
 When she passes by the crowd.
 'T 's kinder nice to be a-goin'
 With a girl 'at makes some show-
 in'—

One you know 'at hain't no snide,
 Makes you feel so satisfied.
 An' I'll tell you she's a trump,
 Never even seen her jump
 Like some silly girls 'ud do,
 When I'd hide and holler "Boo!"
 She'd jest laff an' say "Git out!
 What you hollerin' about?"
 When some girls 'ud have a fit

That 'un don't git skeered a bit,
 Never makes a bit o' row
 When she sees a worm er cow.
 Them kind 's few an' far between;
 Bravest girl I ever seen.
 Tell you 'nuther thing she'll do,
 Mebbe you won't think it's true,
 But if she's jest got a dime
 She'll go halvers ever' time.
 Ah, you goose, you need n't laff;
 That's the kinder girl to have.
 If you knowed her like I do,
 Guess you'd kinder like her too.
 Tell you somep'n' if you 'll swear
 You won't tell it anywhere.
 Oh, you got to cross yer heart
 Earnest, truly, 'fore I start.
 Well, one day I kissed her cheek;
 Gee, but I felt cheap an' weak,
 'Cause at first she kinder flared,
 'N', gracious goodness! I was
 scared.
 But I need n't been, fer la!
 Why, she never told her ma.
 That's what I call grit, don't
 you?
 Sich a girl's worth stickin' to.

PHYLLIS

PHYLLIS, ah, Phyllis, my life is a
 gray day,
 Few are my years, but my griefs
 are not few,
 Ever to youth should each day be
 a May-day,

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Warm wind and rose-breath and
diamonded dew —
Phyllis, ah, Phyllis, my life is a
gray day.

Oh for the sunlight that shines on
a May-day!

Only the cloud hangeth over
my life.

Love that should bring me youth's
happiest heyday

Brings me but seasons of sor-
row and strife;

Phyllis, ah, Phyllis, my life is a
gray day.

Sunshine or shadow, or gold day
or gray day,

Life must be lived as our des-
tinies rule;

Leisure or labor or work day or
play day —

Feasts for the famous and fun
for the fool;

Phyllis, ah, Phyllis, my life is a
gray day.

RIGHT'S SECURITY

WHAT if the wind do howl with-
out,

And turn the creaking weather-
vane;

What if the arrows of the rain
Do beat against the window-pane?

Art thou not armored strong and
fast

Against the sallies of the blast?
Art thou not sheltered safe and
well

Against the flood's insistent swell?

What boots it, that thou stand'st
alone,

And laughest in the battle's face
When all the weak have fled the
place

And let their feet and fears keep
pace?

Thou wavest still thine ensign,
high,

And shoutest thy loud battle-cry;
Higher than e'er the tempest
roared,

It cleaves the silence like a sword.

Right arms and armors, too, that
man

Who will not compromise with
wrong;

Though single, he must front the
throng,

And wage the battle hard and
long.

Minorities, since time began,
Have shown the better side of
man;

And often in the lists of Time
One man has made a cause sub-
lime!

IF

IF life were but a dream, my Love,
And death the waking time;

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

If day had not a beam, my Love,
And night had not a rhyme,—
A barren, barren world were
this
Without one saving gleam;
I'd only ask that with a kiss
You'd wake me from the
dream.

If dreaming were the sum of
days,
And loving were the bane;
If battling for a wreath of bays
Could soothe a heart in pain,—
I'd scorn the meed of battle's
might,
All other aims above
I'd choose the human's higher
right,
To suffer and to love!

THE SONG

My soul, lost in the music's mist,
Roamed, rapt, 'neath skies of ame-
thyst.
The cheerless streets grew summer
meads,
The Son of Phoebus spurred his
steeds,
And, wand'ring down the mazy
tune,
December lost its way in June,
While from a verdant vale I
heard
The piping of a love-lorn bird.

A something in the tender strain
Revived an old, long-conquered
pain,
And as in depths of many seas,
My heart was drowned in mem-
ories.
The tears came welling to my
eyes,
Nor could I ask it otherwise;
For, oh! a sweetness seems to
last
Amid the dregs of sorrows past.

It stirred a chord that here of
late
I'd grown to think could not vi-
brate.
It brought me back the trust of
youth,
The world again was joy and
truth.
And Avice, blooming like a
bride,
Once more stood trusting at my
side.
But still, with bosom desolate,
The 'lorn bird sang to find his
mate.

Then there are trees, and lights
and stars,
The silv'ry tinkle of guitars;
And throbs again as throbbed that
waltz,
Before I knew that hearts were
false.
Then like a cold wave on a shore,

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Comes silence and she sings no
more.

I wake, I breathe, I think again,
And walk the sordid ways of men.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Air a-gittin' cool an' coolah, /
Frost a-comin' in de night,
Hicka' nuts an' wa'nuts fallin',
Possum keepin' out o' sight.
Tu'key struttin' in de ba'nya'd,
Nary step so proud ez his;
Keep on struttin', Mistah Tu'key,
Yo' do' know whut time it is.

Cidah press commence a-squeakin'
Eatin' apples sto'ed away,
Chillun swa'min' 'roun' lak ho'-
nets,

Huntin' aigs ermung de hay.
Mistah Tu'key keep on gobblin'
At de geese a-flyin' souf,
Oomph! dat bird do' know whut's
comin';
Ef he did he 'd shet his mouf.

Pumpkin gittin' good an' yallah
Mek me open up my eyes;
Seems lak it's a-lookin' at me
Jes' a-la'in' dah sayin' "Pies."
Tu'key gobbler gwine 'roun' blow-
in',
Gwine 'roun' gibbin' sass an'
slack;

Keep on talkin', Mistah Tu'key,
You ain't seed no almanac.

Fa'mer walkin' th'oo de ba'nya'd
Seein' how things is comin' on,
Sees ef all de fowls is fatt'nin' —
Good times comin' sho's you
bo'n.

Hyeahs dat tu'key gobbler brag-
gin',

Den his face break in a smile —
Nebbah min', you sassy rascal,
He's gwine nab you atter while.

Choppin' suet in de kitchen,
Stonin' raisins in de hall,
Beef a-cookin' fu' de mince meat,
Spices groun' — I smell 'em all.
Look hyeah, Tu'key, stop dat
gobblin',

You ain' lured de sense ob
feah,
You ol' fool, yo' naik's in dangah,
Do' you know Thanksgibbin's
hyeah?

WHY FADES A DREAM?

WHY fades a dream?
An iridescent ray
Flecked in between the tryst
Of night and day.
Why fades a dream? —
Of consciousness the shade
Wrought out by lack of light and
made
Upon life's stream.
Why fades a dream?

That thought may thrive,
So fades the fleshless dream;

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

Lest men should learn to trust
The things that seem.
So fades a dream,
That living thought may grow
And like a waxing star-beam glow
Upon life's stream —
So fades a dream.

THE SPARROW

A LITTLE bird, with plumage
brown,
Beside my window flutters down,
A moment chirps its little strain,
Ten taps upon my window-pane,
And chirps again, and hops along,
To call my notice to its song;
But I work on, nor heed its lay,
Till, in neglect, it flies away.

So birds of peace and hope and
love
Come fluttering earthward from
above,
To settle on life's window-sills,
And ease our load of earthly ills;
But we, in traffic's rush and din
Too deep engaged to let them in,
With deadened heart and sense
plod on,
Nor know our loss till they are
gone.

SPEAKIN' O' CHRISTMAS

BREEZES blowin' middlin' brisk,
Snow-flakes thro' the air a-whisk,
Fallin' kind o' soft an' light,

Not enough to make things white,
But jest sorter siftin' down
So 's to cover up the brown
Of the dark world's rugged ways
'N' make things look like holidays.
Not smoothed over, but jest
specked,
Sorter strainin' fur effect,
An' not quite a-gittin' through
What it started in to do.
Mercy sakes! it does seem queer
Christmas day is 'most nigh here,
Somehow it don't seem to me
Christmas like it used to be,—
Christmas with its ice an' snow,
Christmas of the long ago.
You could feel its stir an' hum
Weeks an' weeks before it come;
Somethin' in the atmosphere
Told you when the day was near,
Did n't need no almanacs;
That was one o' Nature's fac's.
Every cottage decked out gay —
Cedar wreaths an' holly spray —
An' the stores, how they were
drest,
Tinsel tell you could n't rest;
Every winder fixed up pat,
Candy canes, an' things like that;
Noah's arks, an' guns, an' dolls,
An' all kinds o' fol-de-rols.
Then with frosty bells a-chime,
Slidin' down the hills o' time,
Right amidst the fun an' din
Christmas come a-bustlin' in,
Raised his cheery voice to call
Out a welcome to us all;

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Hale and hearty, strong an' bluff,
That was Christmas, sure enough.
Snow knee-deep an' coastin' fine,
Frozen mill-ponds all ashine,
Seemin' jest to lay in wait,
Beggin' you to come an' skate.
An' you 'd git your gal an' go
Stumpin' cheerily thro' the snow,
Feelin' pleased an' skeert an'
warm

'Cause she had a-holt yore arm.
Why, when Christmas come in,
we

Spent the whole glad day in glee,
Havin' fun an' feastin' high
An' some courtin' on the sly.
Bustin' in some neighbor's door
An' then suddenly, before
He could give his voice a lift,
Yellin' at him, "Christmas gift."
Now sich things are never heard,
"Merry Christmas" is the word.
But it's only change o' name,
An' means givin' jest the same.
There's too many new-styled ways
Now about the holidays.
I'd jest like once more to see
Christmas like it used to be!

LONESOME

MOTHER 's gone a-visitin' to spend
a month er two,
An', oh, the house is lonesome ez a
nest whose birds has flew
To other trees to build ag'in; the
rooms seem jest so bare

That the echoes run like sperrits
from the kitchen to the
stair.

The shetters flap more lazy-like
'n what they used to do,
Sence mother's gone a-visitin' to
spend a month er two.

We've killed the fattest chicken
an' we've cooked her to a
turn;

We've made the richest gravy,
but I jest don't give a durn
Fur nothin' 'at I drink er eat, er
nothin' 'at I see.

The food ain't got the pleasant
taste it used to have to me.

They's somep'n' stickin' in my
throat ez tight ez hardened
glue,

Sence mother's gone a-visitin' to
spend a month er two.

The hollyhocks air jest ez pink,
they're double ones at that,

An' I wuz prouder of 'em than a
baby of a cat.

But now I don't go near 'em,
though they nod an' blush at
me,

Fur they's somep'n' seems to gall
me in their keerless sort o'
glee

An' all their fren'ly noddin' an'
their blushin' seems to say:

"You're purty lonesome, John,
old boy, sence mother's gone
away."

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

The neighbors ain't so fren'ly ez it
seems they 'd ort to be;
They seem to be a-lookin' kinder
sideways like at me,
A-kinder feared they 'd tech me
off ez ef I wuz a match,
An' all because 'at mother's gone
an' I'm a-keepin' batch!
I'm shore I don't do nothin'
worse 'n what I used to do
'Fore mother went a-visitin' to
spend a month er two.

The sparrers ac's more fearsome
like an' won't hop quite so
near,
The cricket's chirp is sadder, an'
the sky ain't ha'f so clear;
When ev'nin' comes, I set an'
smoke tell my eyes begin to
swim,
An' things aroun' commence to
look all blurred an' faint an'
dim.
Well, I guess I 'll have to own up
'at I 'm feelin' purty blue
Sence mother's gone a-visitin' to
spend a month er two.

GROWIN' GRAY

HELLO, ole man, you're a-gittin'
gray,
An' it beats ole Ned to see the
way
'At the crow's feet's a-getherin'
aroun' yore eyes;

Tho' it ought n't to cause me no
su'prise,
Fur there's many a sun 'at you've
seen rise
An' many a one you've seen go
down
Sence yore step was light an' yore
hair was brown,
An' storms an' snows have had
their way —
Hello, ole man, you're a-gittin'
gray.

Hello, ole man, you're a-gittin'
gray,
An' the youthful pranks 'at you
used to play
Are dreams of a far past long ago
That lie in a heart where the fires
burn low —
That has lost the flame though it
kept the glow,
An' spite of drivin' snow an' storm,
Beats bravely on forever warm.
December holds the place of
May —
Hello, ole man, you're a-gittin'
gray.

Hello, ole man, you're a-gittin'
gray —
Who cares what the carpin' young-
sters say?
For, after all, when the tale is told,
Love proves if a man is young or
old!
Old age can't make the heart grow
cold

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

When it does the will of an honest
mind;

When it beats with love fur all
mankind;

Then the night but leads to a fairer
day —

Hello, ole man, you 're a-gittin'
gray!

TO THE MEMORY OF MARY YOUNG

God has his plans, and what if we
With our sight be too blind to see
Their full fruition; cannot he,
Who made it, solve the mystery?
One whom we loved has fall'n
asleep,

Not died; although her calm be
deep,

Some new, unknown, and strange
surprise

In Heaven holds enrapt her eyes.

And can you blame her that her
gaze

Is turned away from earthly ways,
When to her eyes God's light and
love

Have giv'n the view of things
above?

A gentle spirit sweetly good,
The pearl of precious womanhood;
Who heard the voice of duty
clear,

And found her mission soon and
near.

She loved all nature, flowers fair,
The warmth of sun, the kiss of air,
The birds that filled the sky with
song,

The stream that laughed its way
along.

Her home to her was shrine and
throne,

But one love held her not alone;
She sought out poverty and grief,
Who touched her robe and found
relief.

So sped she in her Master's
work,

Too busy and too brave to shirk,
When through the silence, dusk
and dim,

God called her and she fled to him.
We wonder at the early call,
And tears of sorrow can but fall
For her o'er whom we spread the
pall;

But faith, sweet faith, is over
all.

The house is dust, the voice is
dumb,

But through undying years to
come,

The spark that glowed within her
soul

Shall light our footsteps to the
goal.

She went her way; but oh, she
trod

The path that led her straight to
God.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

Such lives as this put death to
scorn;
They lose our day to find God's
morn.

WHEN MALINDY SINGS

G'WAY an' quit dat noise, Miss
Lucy —

Put dat music book away;
What 's de use to keep on tryin'?
Ef you practise twell you're
gray,

You cain't sta't no notes a-flyin'
Lak de ones dat rants and rings
F'om de kitchen to be big woods
When Malindy sings.

You ain't got de nachel o'gans
Fu' to make de soun' come right,
You ain't got de tu'ns an' twistin's
Fu' to make it sweet an' light.
Tell you one thing now, Miss
Lucy,

An' I'm tellin' you fu' true,
When hit comes to raal right
singin',
"T ain't no easy thing to do.

Easy 'nough fu' folks to hollah,
Lookin' at de lines an' dots,
When dey ain't no one kin sence it,
An' de chune comes in, in spots;
But fu' real melojous music,
Dat jes' strikes yo' hea't and
clings,

Jes' you stan' an' listen wif me
When Malindy sings.

Ain't you nevah hyeahd Malindy?
Blessed soul, tek up de cross!
Look hyeah, ain't you jokin',
honey?

Well, you don't know whut you
los'.

Y' ought to hyeah dat gal a-wa'b-
lin',

Robins, la'ks, an' all dem things,
Heish dey moufs an' hides dey
face.

When Malindy sings.

Fiddlin' man jes' stop his fiddlin',
Lay his fiddle on de she'f;

Mockin'-bird quit tryin' to whistle,
'Cause he jes' so shamed hisse'f.

Folks a-playin' on de banjo
Drops dey fingahs on de
strings —

Bless yo' soul — fu'gits to move,
em,
When Malindy sings.

She jes' spreads huh mouf and hol-
lahs,

"Come to Jesus," twell you
hyeah

Sinnahs' tremblin' steps and voices,
Timid-lak a-drawin' neah;

Den she tu'ns to "Rock of Ages,"

Simply to de cross she clings,
An' you fin' yo' teahs a-drappin'
When Malindy sings.

Who dat says dat humble praises
Wif de Master nevah counts?

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Heish yo' mouf, I hyeah dat music,
Ez hit rises up an' mounts —
Floatin' by de hills an' valleys,
Way above dis buryin' sod,
Ez hit makes its way in glory
To de very gates of God!

Oh, hit's sweetah dan de music
Of an edicated band;
An' hit's dearah dan de battle's
Song o' triumph in de lan'.
It seems holier dan evenin'
When de solemn chu'ch bell
rings,
Ez I sit an' ca'mly listen
While Malindy sings.

Towsah, stop dat ba'kin', hyeah
me!
Mandy, mek dat chile keep still;
Don't you hyeah de echoes callin'
F'om de valley to de hill?
Let me listen, I can hyeah it,
Th'oo de bresh of angels' wings,
Sof' an' sweet, "Swing Low,
Sweet Chariot,"
Ez Malindy sings.

THE PARTY

DEY had a gread big pahty
down to Tom's de othah
night;
Was I dah? You bet! I nevah
in my life see sich a sight;
All de folks f'om fou' plantations
was invited, an' dey come,

Dey come troopin' thick ez chillun
when dey hyeahs a fife an'
drum.
Evahbody dressed deir fines'—
Heish yo' mouf an' git
away,
Ain't seen no sich fancy dressin'
sence las' quah'tly meetin'
day;
Gals all dressed in silks an' satins,
not a wrinkle ner a crease,
Eyes a-battin', teeth a-shinin', haih
breshed back ez slick ez
grease;
Sku'ts all tucked an' puffed an'
ruffled, evah blessed seam an'
stitch;
Ef you 'd seen 'em wif deir mistus,
could n't swahed to which
was which.
Men all dressed up in Prince Al-
berts, swaller-tails 'u'd tek yo'
bref!
I cain't tell you nothin' 'bout it,
y' ought to seen it fu' yo'se'f.
Who was dah? Now who you
askin'? How you 'spect I
gwine to know?
You mus' think I stood an'
counted evahbody at de dó.'
Ole man Babah's house-boy Isaac,
brung dat gal, Malindy Jane,
Huh a-hangin' to his elbow, him
a-struttin' wif a cane;
My, but Hahvey Jones was jeal-
ous! seemed to stick him lak
a tho'n;

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

But he laughed with Viney Cah-
teht, tryin' ha'd to not let on,
But a pusson would 'a' noticed
f'om de d'rection of his look,
Dat he was watchin' ev'ry step dat
Ike an' Lindy took.

Ike he foun' a cheer an' asked huh:
"Won't you set down?" wif
a smile,

An' she answe'd up a-bowin',
"Oh, I reckon 't ain't wuth
while."

Dat was jes' fu' style, I reckon,
'cause she sot down jes' de
same,

An' she stayed dah 'twell he
fetcht huh fu' to jine some
so't o' game;

Den I hyeahd huh sayin' propah,
ez she riz to go away,

"Oh, you raly mus' excuse me,
fu' I hardly keers to play."

But I seen huh in a minute wif de
othahs on de flo',

An' dah was n't any one o' dem
a-playin' any mo';

Comin' down de flo' a-bowin' an'
a-swayin' an' a-swingin',

Puttin' on huh high-toned man-
nahs all de time dat she was
singin':

"Oh, swing Johnny up an' down,
swing him all aroun',

Swing Johnny up an' down, swing
him all aroun',

Oh, swing Johnny up an' down,
swing him all aroun'

Fa' you well, my dahlin'."

Had to laff at ole man Johnson,
he's a caution now, you bet —

Hittin' clost onto a hunderd, but
he's spry an' nimble yet;

He 'lowed how a-so't o' gigglin',
"I ain't ole, I'll let you see,

D'ain't no use in gittin' feeble, now
you youngstahs jes' watch
me,"

An' he grabbed ole Aunt Marier
— weighs th'ee hunderd mo'
er less,

An' he spun huh 'roun' de cabin
swingin' Johnny lak de res'.

Evahbody laffed an' hollahed:
"Go it! Swing huh, Uncle
Jim!"

An' he swung huh too, I reckon,
lak a youngstah, who but
him.

Dat was bettah'n young Scott
Thomas, tryin' to be so awful
smaht.

You know when dey gits to singin'
an' dey comes to dat ere paht:

"In some lady's new brick
house,

In some lady's gyahden.

Ef you don't let me out, I
will jump out,

So fa' you well, my dahlin'."

Den dey's got a circle 'roun' you,
an' you's got to break de
line;

Well, dat dahky was so anxious,
lak to bust hisse'f a-tryin';

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Kep' on blund'rin' 'roun' an'
foolin' 'twell he giv' one
gread big jump,

Broke de line, an lit head-fo'most
in de fiah-place right plump;

Hit 'ad fiah in it, mind you; well,
I thought my soul I'd bust,

Tried my best to keep f'om laffin',
but hit seemed like die I
must!

Y' ought to seen dat man a-scam-
blin' f'om de ashes an' de
grime.

Did it bu'n him! Sich a question,
why he did n't give it time;

Th'ow'd dem ashes and dem cin-
dahs evah which-a-way I
guess,

An' you nevah did, I reckon, clap
yo' eyes on sich a mess;

Fu' he sholy made a picter an' a
funny one to boot,

Wif his clothes all full o' ashes
an' his face all full o' soot.

Well, hit laked to stopped de
pahty, an' I reckon lak ez
not

Dat it would ef Tom's wife,
Mandy, had n't happened on
de spot,

To invite us out to suppah — well,
we scrambled to de table,

An' I'd lak to tell you 'bout it —
what we had — but I ain't
able,

Mention jes' a few things, dough
I know I had n't orter,

Fu' I know 't will staht a hank'rin'
an' yo' mouf 'll 'mence to
worter.

We had wheat bread white ez cot-
ton an' a egg pone jes like
gol',

Hog jole, bilin' hot an' steamin'
roasted shoat an' ham sliced
cold —

Look out! What's de mattah wif
you? Don't be fallin' on de
flo';

Ef it's go'n' to 'fect you dat way,
I won't tell you nothin'
mo'.

Dah now — well, we had hot
chittlin's — now you's tryin'
ag'in to fall,

Cain't you stan' to hyeah about it?
S'pose you'd been an' seed it
all;

Seed dem gread big sweet pertaters,
layin' by de possum's side,

Seed dat coon in all his gravy,
reckon den you'd up and
died!

Mandy 'lowed "you all mus'
'scuse me, d' wa'n't much
upon my she'ves,

But I's done my bes' to suit you,
so set down an' he'p
yo'se'ves."

Tom, he 'lowed: "I don't b'lieve
in 'pologisin' an' perfessin',

Let 'em tek it lak dey ketch it.
Eldah Thompson, ask de
blessin'."

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Wish you'd seed dat colo'ed
preachah cleah his th'oat an'
bow his head;

One eye shet, an' one eye open,—
dis is evah wud he said:

"Lawd, look down in tendah
mussy on sich generous hea'ts
ez dese;

Make us truly thankful, amen.

Pass dat possum, ef you
please!"

Well, we eat and drunk ouah
po'tion, 'twell dah was n't
nothin' lef,

An' we felt jes' like new sausage,
we was mos' nigh stuffed to
def!

Tom, he knowed how we'd be
feelin', so he had de fiddlah
'roun',

An' he made us cleah de cabin
fu' to dance dat suppah
down.

Jim, de fiddlah, chuned his fiddle,
put some rosum on his
bow,

Set a pine box on de table, mounted
it an' let huh go!

He's a fiddlah, now I tell you, an'
he made dat fiddle ring,

'Twell de ol'est an' de lamest had
to give deir feet a fling.

Jigs, cotillions, reels an' break-
downs, cordrills an' a waltz
er two;

Bless yo' soul, dat music winged
'em an' dem people lak to
flew.

Cripple Joe, de old rheumatic,
danced dat flo' f'om side to
middle,

Th'owed away his crutch an'
hopped it; what's rheumatics
'gainst a fiddle?

Eldah Thompson got so tickled
dat he lak to los' his grace,

Had to tek bofe feet an' hol' dem
so 's to keep 'em in deir place.

An' de Christuns an' de sinnahs
got so mixed up on dat flo',

Dat I don't see how dey'd pahted
ef de trump had chanced to
blow.

Well, we danced dat way an' ca-
pahed in de mos' redic'lous
way,

'Twell de roostahs in de bahnyard
cleahed deir th'oats an' crowed
fu' day.

Y' ought to been dah, fu' I tell
you evahthing was rich an'
prime,

An' dey ain't no use in talkin', we
jes had one scrumptious time!

LYRICS OF THE HEARTH-SIDE

LOVE'S APOTHEOSIS

LOVE me. I care not what the
circling years
To me may do.
If, but in spite of time and tears,
You prove but true.

Love me — albeit grief shall dim
mine eyes,
And tears bedew,
I shall not e'en complain, for then
my skies
Shall still be blue.

Love me, and though the winter
snow shall pile,
And leave me chill,
Thy passion's warmth shall make
for me, meanwhile,
A sun-kissed hill.

And when the days have length-
ened into years,
And I grow old,
Oh, spite of pains and griefs and
cares and fears,
Grow thou not cold.

Then hand and hand we shall pass
up the hill,
I say not down;
That twain go up, of love, who 've
loved their fill,—
To gain love's crown.

Love me, and let my life take up
thine own,
As sun the dew.
Come, sit, my queen, for in my
heart a throne
Awaits for you!

THE PARADOX

I AM the mother of sorrows,
I am the ender of grief;
I am the bud and the blossom,
I am the late-falling leaf.

I am thy priest and thy poet,
I am thy serf and thy king;
I cure the tears of the heartsick,
When I come near they shall
sing.

White are my hands as the snow-
drop;
Swart are my fingers as clay;
Dark is my frown as the mid-
night,
Fair is my brow as the day.

Battle and war are my minions,
Doing my will as divine;
I am the calmer of passions,
Peace is a nursling of mine.

Speak to me gently or curse me,
Seek me or fly from my sight;
I am thy fool in the morning,
Thou art my slave in the night.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

Down to the grave will I take
thee,

Out from the noise of the
strife;

Then shalt thou see me and know
me —

Death, then, no longer, but life.

Then shalt thou sing at my com-
ing,

Kiss me with passionate breath,
Clasp me and smile to have
thought me

Aught save the foeman of
Death.

Come to me, brother, when weary,
Come when thy lonely heart
swells;

I'll guide thy footsteps and lead
thee

Down where the Dream Wom-
an dwells.

OVER THE HILLS

OVER the hills and the valleys of
dreaming

Slowly I take my way.

Life is the night with its dream-
visions teeming,

Death is the waking at day.

Down thro' the dales and the bow-
ers of loving,

Singing, I roam afar.

Daytime or night-time, I 'con-
stantly roving,—

Dearest one, thou art my star.

WITH THE LARK

NIGHT is for sorrow and dawn is
for joy,

Chasing the troubles that fret and
annoy;

Darkness for sighing and daylight
for song,—

Cheery and chaste the strain,
heartfelt and strong.

All the night through, though I
moan in the dark,

I wake in the morning to sing
with the lark.

Deep in the midnight the rain
whips the leaves,

Softly and sadly the wood-spirit
grieves.

But when the first hue of dawn
tints the sky,

I shall shake out my wings like
the birds and be dry;

And though, like the rain-drops, I
grieved through the dark,

I shall wake in the morning to
sing with the lark.

On the high hills of heaven, some
morning to be,

Where the rain shall not grieve
thro' the leaves of the tree,

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

There my heart will be glad for
the pain I have known,
For my hand will be clasped in the
hand of mine own;
And though life has been hard and
death's pathway been dark,
I shall wake in the morning to
sing with the lark.

IN SUMMER

OH, summer has clothed the earth
In a cloak from the loom of
the sun!
And a mantle, too, of the skies'
soft blue,
And a belt where the rivers run.

And now for the kiss of the wind,
And the touch of the air's soft
hands,
With the rest from strife and the
heat of life,
With the freedom of lakes and
lands.

I envy the farmer's boy
Who sings as he follows the
plow;
While the shining green of the
young blades lean
To the breezes that cool his
brow.

He sings to the dewy morn,
No thought of another's ear;

But the song he sings is a chant
for kings
And the whole wide world to
hear.

He sings of the joys of life,
Of the pleasures of work and
rest,
From an o'erfull heart, without
aim or art;
'Tis a song of the merriest.

O ye who toil in the town,
And ye who moil in the mart,
Hear 'the artless song, and your
faith made strong
Shall renew your joy of heart.

Oh, poor were the worth of the
world
If never a song were heard,—
If the sting of grief had no re-
lief,
And never a heart were stirred.

So, long as the streams run down,
And as long as the robins trill,
Let us taunt old Care with a
merry air,
And sing in the face of ill.

THE MYSTIC SEA

THE smell of the sea in my nos-
trils,
The sound of the sea in mine
ears;

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

The touch of the spray on my
burning face,
Like the mist of reluctant tears.

The blue of the sky above me,
The green of the waves beneath;
The sun flashing down on a gray-white sail
Like a scimitar from its sheath.

And ever the breaking billows,
And ever the rocks' disdain;
And ever a thrill in mine inmost heart
That my reason cannot explain.

So I say to my heart, "Be silent,
The mystery of time is here;
Death's way will be plain when
we fathom the main,
And the secret of life be clear."

A SAILOR'S SONG

OH for the breath of the briny
deep,
And the tug of the bellying sail,
With the sea-gull's cry across the
sky
And a passing boatman's hail.
For, be she fierce or be she gay,
The sea is a famous friend alway.

Ho! for the plains where the
dolphins play,
And the bend of the mast and
spars,

And a fight at night with the wild
sea-sprite
When the foam has drowned the
stars.
And, pray, what joy can the lands-
man feel
Like the rise and fall of a sliding
keel?

Fair is the mead; the lawn is fair
And the birds sing sweet on the
lea;
But the echo soft of a song aloft
Is the strain that pleases me;
And swish of rope and ring of
chain
Are music to men who sail the
main.

Then, if you love me, let me sail
While a vessel dares the deep;
For the ship's my wife, and the
breath of life
Are the raging gales that sweep;
And when I'm done with calm
and blast,
A slide o'er the side, and rest at
last.

THE BOHEMIAN

BRING me the liver'y of no other
man.
I am my own to robe me at my
pleasure.
Accepted rules to me disclose no
treasure:

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

What is the chief who shall my
garments plan?

No garb conventional but I'll
attack it.

(Come, why not don my span-
gled jacket?)

ABSENCE

GOOD-NIGHT, my love, for I have
dreamed of thee

In waking dreams, until my soul
is lost —

Is lost in passion's wide and shore-
less sea,

Where, like a ship, unruddered, it
is tost

Hither and thither at the wild
waves' will.

There is no potent Master's voice
—to still

This newer, more tempestuous
Galilee!

The stormy petrels of my fancy
fly

In warning course across the
darkening green,

And, like a frightened bird, my
heart doth cry

And seek to find some rock of rest
between

The threatening sky and the re-
lentless wave.

It is not length of life that grief
doth crave,

But only calm and peace in which
to die.

Here let me rest upon this single
hope,

For oh, my wings are weary of the
wind,

And with its stress no more may
strive or cope.

One cry has dulled mine ears,
mine eyes are blind,—

Would that o'er all the interven-
ing space,

I might fly forth and see thee face
to face.

I fly; I search, but, love, in gloom
I grope.

Fly home, far bird, unto thy wait-
ing nest;

Spread thy strong wings above the
wind-swept sea.

Beat the grim breeze with thy un-
ruffled breast

Until thou sittest wing to wing
with me.

Then, let the past bring up its
tales of wrong;

We shall chant low our sweet con-
nubial song,

Till storm and doubt and past no
more shall be!

HER THOUGHT AND HIS

THE gray of the sea, and the gray
of the sky,

A glimpse of the moon like a half-
closed eye.

The gleam on the waves and the
light on the land,

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

A thrill in my heart,— and — my
sweetheart's hand.

She turned from the sea with a
woman's grace,
And the light fell soft on her
upturned face,
And I thought of the flood-tide of
infinite bliss
That would flow to my heart from
a single kiss.

But my sweetheart was shy, so I
dared not ask
For the boon, so bravely I wore
the mask.

But into her face there came a
flame:—

I wonder could she have been
thinking the same?

THE RIGHT TO DIE

I HAVE no fancy for that ancient
cant

That makes us masters of our des-
tinies,

And not our lives, to hold or give
them up

As will directs; I cannot, will not
think

That men, the subtle worms, who
plot and plan

And scheme and calculate with
such shrewd wit,

Are such great blund'ring fools as
not to know

When they have lived enough.

Men court not death

When there are sweets still left in
life to taste.

Nor will a brave man choose to
live when he,

Full deeply drunk of life, has
reached the dregs,

And knows that now but bitter-
ness remains.

He is the coward who, outfaced
in this,

Fears the false goblins of another
life.

I honor him who being much
harassed

Drinks of sweet courage until
drunk of it,—

Then seizing Death, reluctant, by
the hand,

Leaps with him, fearless, to eter-
nal peace!

BEHIND THE ARRAS

As in some dim baronial hall re-
strained,

A prisoner sits, engirt by secret
doors

And waving tapestries that argue
forth

Strange passages into the outer
air;

So in this dimmer room which we
call life,

Thus sits the soul and marks with
eye intent

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

That mystic curtain o'er the portal death;

Still deeming that behind the arras lies

The lambent way that leads to lasting light.

Poor fooled and foolish soul!
Know now that death

Is but a blind, false door that nowhere leads,

And gives no hope of exit final, free.

WHEN THE OLD MAN SMOKES

IN the forenoon's restful quiet,

When the boys are off at school,
When the window lights are shaded

And the chimney-corner cool,
Then the old man seeks his arm-chair,

Lights his pipe and settles back;
Falls a-dreaming as he draws it
Till the smoke-wreaths gather black.

And the tear-drops come a-trickling

Down his cheeks, a silver flow —

Smoke or memories you wonder,

But you never ask him,—no;

For there's something almost sacred

To the other family folks

In those moods of silent dreaming

When the old man smokes.

Ah, perhaps he sits there dreaming

Of the love of other days

And of how he used to lead her

Through the merry dance's maze;

How he called her "little princess,"

And, to please her, used to twine

Tender wreaths to crown her tresses,

From the "matrimony vine."

Then before his mental vision

Comes, perhaps, a sadder day,

When they left his little princess

Sleeping with her fellow clay.

How his young heart throbbed, and pained him!

Why, the memory of it chokes!

Is it of these things he's thinking

When the old man smokes?

But some brighter thoughts possess him,

For the tears are dried the while.

And the old, worn face is wrinkled

In a reminiscent smile,

From the middle of the forehead

To the feebly trembling lip,

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

At some ancient prank remem-
bered
Or some long unheard-of quip.

Then the lips relax their tension
And the pipe begins to slide,
Till in little clouds of ashes,
It falls softly at his side;
And his head bends low and lower
Till his chin lies on his breast,
And he sits in peaceful slumber
Like a little child at rest.

Dear old man, there's something
sad'ning,
In these dreamy moods of yours,
Since the present proves so fleet-
ing,
All the past for you endures.
Weeping at forgotten sorrows,
Smiling at forgotten jokes;
Life epitomized in minutes,
When the old man smokes.

THE GARRET

WITHIN a London garret high,
Above the roofs and near the sky,
My ill-rewarding pen I ply
To win me bread.
This little chamber, six by four,
Is castle, study, den, and more,—
Altho' no carpet decks the floor,
Nor down, the bed.

My room is rather bleak and bare;
I only have one broken chair,
But then, there's plenty of fresh
air,—

Some light, beside.
What tho' I cannot ask my friends
To share with me my odds and
ends,
A liberty my aerie lends,
To most denied.

The bore who falters at the stair
No more shall be my curse and
care,
And duns shall fail to find my lair
With beastly bills.
When debts have grown and
funds are short,
I find it rather pleasant sport
To live "above the common sort"
With all their ills.

I write my rhymes and sing away,
And dawn may come or dusk or
day:
Tho' fare be poor, my heart is
gay,
And full of glee.
Though chimney-pots be all my
views;
'Tis nearer for the winging
Muse,
So I am sure she'll not refuse
To visit me.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

TO E. H. K.

ON THE RECEIPT OF A FAMILIAR
POEM

To me, like hauntings of a va-
grant breath
From some far forest which I
once have known,
The perfume of this flower of
verse is blown.
Tho' seemingly soul-blossoms faint
to death,
Naught that with joy she bears
e'er withereth.
So, tho' the pregnant years have
come and flown,
Lives come and gone and al-
tered like mine own,
This poem comes to me a shib-
boleth:
Brings sound of past communings
to my ear,
Turns round the tide of time
and bears me back
Along an old and long un-
traversed way;
Makes me forget this is a later
year,
Makes me tread o'er a reminis-
cent track,
Half sad, half glad, to one
forgotten day!

A BRIDAL MEASURE

COME, essay a sprightly measure,
Tuned to some light song of
pleasure.

Maidens, let your brows be
crowned

As we foot this merry round.

From the ground a voice is sing-
ing,

From the sod a soul is springing.
Who shall say 't is but a clod
Quick'ning upward toward its
God?

Who shall say it? Who may
know it,

That the clod is not a poet
Waiting but a gleam to waken
In a spirit music-shaken?

Phyllis, Phyllis, why be waiting?
In the woods the birds are mating.
From the tree beside the wall,
Hear the am'rous robin call.

Listen to yon thrush's trilling;
Phyllis, Phyllis, are you willing,
When love speaks from cave
and tree,
Only we should silent be?

When the year, itself renewing,
All the world with flowers is
strewing,
Then through Youth's Arcadian
land,
Love and song go hand in hand.

Come, unfold your vocal treasure,
Sing with me a nuptial measure,—
Let this springtime gambol be
Bridal dance for you and me.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

VENGEANCE IS SWEET

WHEN I was young I longed for
Love,
And held his glory far above
All other earthly things. I cried:
"Come, Love, dear Love, with me
abide;"
And with my subtlest art I wooed,
And eagerly the wight pursued.
But Love was gay and Love was
shy,
He laughed at me and passed me
by.

Well, I grew old and I grew gray,
When Wealth came wending
down my way.
I took his golden hand with glee,
And comrades from that day were
we.

Then Love came back with dole-
ful face,
And prayed that I would give him
place.
But, though his eyes with tears
were dim,
I turned my back and laughed at
him.

A HYMN

AFTER READING "LEAD, KINDLY
LIGHT."

LEAD gently, Lord, and slow,
For oh, my steps are weak,
And ever as I go,
Some soothing sentence speak;

That I may turn my face
Through doubt's obscurity
Toward thine abiding-place,
E'en tho' I cannot see.

For lo, the way is dark;
Through mist and cloud I grope,
Save for that fitful spark,
The little flame of hope.

Lead gently, Lord, and slow,
For fear that I may fall;
I know not where to go
Unless I hear thy call.

My fainting soul doth yearn
For thy green hills afar;
So let thy mercy burn —
My greater, guiding star!

JUST WHISTLE A BIT

JUST whistle a bit, if the day be
dark,
And the sky be overcast:
If mute be the voice of the piping
lark,
Why, pipe your own small blast.

And it's wonderful how o'er the
gray sky-track
The truant warbler comes steal-
ing back.
But why need he come? for your
soul's at rest,
And the song in the heart,—ah,
that is best.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Just whistle a bit, if the night be
drear

And the stars refuse to shine:
And a gleam that mocks the star-
light clear

Within you glows benign.

Till the dearth of light in the
glooming skies

Is lost to the sight of your soul-lit
eyes.

What matters the absence of moon
or star?

The light within is the best by far.

Just whistle a bit, if there's work
to do,

With the mind or in the soil.

And your note will turn out a
talisman true

To exorcise grim Toil.

It will lighten your burden and
make you feel

That there's nothing like work as
a sauce for a meal.

And with song in your heart and
the meal in — its place,

There'll be joy in your bosom and
light in your face.

Just whistle a bit, if your heart
be sore;

'Tis a wonderful balm for pain.

Just pipe some old melody-o'er
and o'er

Till it soothes like summer rain.

And perhaps't would be best in a
later day,

When Death comes stalking down
the way,

To knock at your bosom and see
if you're fit,

Then, as you wait calmly, just
whistle a bit.

THE BARRIER

THE Midnight wooed the Morn-
ing-Star,

And prayed her: "Love come
nearer;

Your swinging coldly there afar
To me but makes you dearer!"

The Morning-Star was pale with
dole

As said she, low replying:

"Oh, lover mine, soul of my soul,
For you I too am sighing.

"But One ordained when we
were born,

In spite of Love's insistence,

That Night might only view the
Morn

Adoring at a distance."

But as she spoke the jealous Sun
Across the heavens panted.

"Oh, whining fools," he cried,
"have done;

Your wishes shall be granted!"

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

He hurled his flaming lances far;
The twain stood unaffrighted —
And Midnight and the Morning-
Star
Lay down in death united!

DREAMS

DREAM on, for dreams are sweet:
Do not awaken!
Dream on, and at thy feet
Pomegranates shall be shaken.

Who likeneth the youth
Of life to morning?
'Tis like the night in truth,
Rose-coloured dreams adorning.

The wind is soft above,
The shadows umber.
(There is a dream called Love.)
Take thou the fullest slumber!

In Lethe's soothing stream,
Thy thirst thou slakest.
Sleep, sleep; 't is sweet to dream.
Oh, weep when thou awakest!

THE DREAMER

TEMPLES he built and palaces of
air,
And, with the artist's parent-
pride aglow,
His fancy saw his vague ideals
grow
Into creations marvellously fair;

He set his foot upon Fame's
nether stair.
But ah, his dream,— it had
entranced him so
He could not move. He could
no farther go;
But paused in joy that he was even
there!

He did not wake until one day
there gleamed
Thro' his dark consciousness a
light that racked
His being till he rose, alert to act.
But lo! what he had dreamed, the
while he dreamed,
Another, wedding action unto
thought,
Into the living, pulsing world
had brought.

WAITING

THE sun has slipped his tether
And galloped down the west.
(Oh, it's weary, weary waiting,
love.)
The little bird is sleeping
In the softness of its nest.
Night follows day, day follows
dawn,
And so the time has come and
gone:
And it's weary, weary waiting,
love.

The cruel wind is rising
With a whistle and a wail.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

(And it's weary, weary waiting,
love.)

My eyes are seaward straining
For the coming of a sail;
But void the sea, and void the
beach
Far and beyond where gaze can
reach!

And it's weary, weary waiting,
love.

I heard the bell-buoy ringing —
How long ago it seems!

(Oh, it's weary, weary waiting,
love.)

And ever still, its knelling

Crashes in upon my dreams.
The banns were read, my frock
was sewn;

Since then two seasons' winds
have blown —

And it's weary, weary waiting,
love.

The stretches of the ocean

Are bare and bleak to-day.

(Oh, it's weary, weary waiting,
love.)

My eyes are growing dimmer —

Is it tears, or age, or spray?

But I will stay till you come home.

Strange ships come in across the
foam!

But it's weary, weary waiting,
love.

THE END OF THE CHAPTER

AH, yes, the chapter ends to-day;
We even lay the book away;
But oh, how sweet the moments
sped
Before the final page was read!

We tried to read between the lines
The Author's deep-concealed de-
signs;

But scant reward such search se-
cures;

You saw my heart and I saw
yours.

The Master,— He who penned
the page

And bade us read it,— He is sage:
And what he orders, you and I
Can but obey, nor question why.

We read together and forgot
The world about us. Time was
not.

Unheeded and unfelt, it fled.
We read and hardly knew we
read.

Until beneath a sadder sun,
We came to know the book was
done.

Then, as our minds were but new
lit,

It dawned upon us what was writ;

And we were startled. In our
eyes,

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

Looked forth the light of great
surprise.

Then as a deep-toned tocsin tolls,
A voice spoke forth: "Behold
your souls!"

I do, I do. I cannot look
Into your eyes: so close the book.
But brought it grief or brought it
bliss,

No other page shall read like this!

SYMPATHY

I KNOW what the caged bird feels,
alas!

When the sun is bright on the
upland slopes;

When the wind stirs soft through
the springing grass,
And the river flows like a stream
of glass;

When the first bird sings and
the first bud opes,
And the faint perfume from its
chalice steals—

I know what the caged bird feels!

I know why the caged bird beats
his wing

Till its blood is red on the cruel
bars;

For he must fly back to his perch
and cling

When he fain would be on the
bough a-swing;

And a pain still throbs in the
old, old scars

And they pulse again with a keener
sting—

I know why he beats his wing!

I know why the caged bird sings,
ah me,

When his wing is bruised and
his bosom sore,—

When he beats his bars and he
would be free;

It is not a carol of joy or glee,
But a prayer that he sends from
his heart's deep core,

But a plea, that upward to Heaven
he flings—

I know why the caged bird sings!

LOVE AND GRIEF

OUT of my heart, one treach'rous
winter's day,

I locked young Love and threw
the key away.

Grief, wandering widely, found
the key,

And hastened with it, straight-
way, back to me,

With Love beside him. He un-
locked the door

And bade Love enter with him
there and stay.

And so the twain abide for ever-
more.

LOVE'S CHASTENING

Once Love grew bold and arro-
gant of air,

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Proud of the youth that made him
fresh and fair;
So unto Grief he spake, "What
right hast thou
To part or parcel of this heart?"
Grief's brow
Was darkened with the storm of
inward strife;
Thrice smote he Love as only he
might dare,
And Love, pride purged, was chas-
tened all his life.

MORTALITY

ASHES to ashes, dust unto dust,
What of his loving, what of his
lust?
What of his passion, what of his
pain?
What of his poverty, what of his
pride?
Earth, the great mother, has called
him again:
Deeply he sleeps, the world's ver-
dict defied.
Shall he be tried again? Shall he
go free?
Who shall the court convene?
Where shall it be?
No answer on the land, none from
the sea.
Only we know that as he did, we
must:
You with your theories, you with
your trust,—
Ashes to ashes, dust unto dust!

LOVE

A LIFE was mine full of the close
concern
Of many-voiced affairs. The
world sped fast;
Behind me, ever rolled a preg-
nant past.
A present came equipped with lore
to learn.
Art, science, letters, in their turn,
Each one allured me with its
treasures vast;
And I staked all for wisdom,
till at last
Thou cam'st and taught my soul
anew to yearn.
I had not dreamed that I could
turn away
From all that men with brush
and pen had wrought;
But ever since that memorable
day
When to my heart the truth of
love was brought,
I have been wholly yielded to
its sway,
And had no room for any other
thought.

SHE GAVE ME A ROSE

SHE gave a rose,
And I kissed it and pressed it.
I love her, she knows,
And my action confessed it.
She gave me a rose,
And I kissed it and pressed it.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

Ah, how my heart glows;
 Could I ever have guessed it?
It is fair to suppose
 That I might have repressed it:
She gave me a rose,
 And I kissed it and pressed it.

'T was a rhyme in life's prose
 That uplifted and blest it.
Man's nature, who knows
 Until love comes to test it?
She gave me a rose,
 And I kissed it and pressed it.

Be thy far home by mountain,
 vale, or sea.
My yearning heart may never find
 its rest
Until thou liest rapt upon my
 breast.
The wind may bring its perfume
 from the south,
Is it so sweet as breath from my
 love's mouth?
Oh, naught that surely is, and
 naught that seems
May turn me from the lady of my
 dreams.

DREAM SONG I

LONG years ago, within a distant
 clime,
Ere Love had touched me with
 his wand sublime,
I dreamed of one to make my life's
 calm May
The panting passion of a sum-
 mer's day.
And ever since, in almost sad sus-
 pense,
I have been waiting with a soul
 intense
To greet and take unto myself
 the beams,
Of her, my star, the lady of my
 dreams.
O Love, still longed and looked
 for, come to me,

DREAM SONG II

PRAY, what can dreams avail
 To make love or to mar?
The child within the cradle rail
 Lies dreaming of the star.
But is the star by this beguiled
To leave its place and seek the
 child?

The poor plucked rose within its
 glass
 Still dreameth of the bee;
But, tho' the lagging moments
 pass,
 Her Love she may not see.
If dream of child and flower fail,
Why should a maiden's dreams
 prevail?

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

CHRISTMAS IN THE HEART

THE snow lies deep upon the
ground,
And winter's brightness all around
Decks bravely out the forest sere,
With jewels of the brave old year.
The coasting crowd upon the hill
With some new spirit seems to
thrill;
And all the temple bells achime.
Ring out the glee of Christmas
time.

In happy homes the brown oak-
bough
Vies with the red-gemmed holly
now;
And here and there, like pearls,
there show
The berries of the mistletoe.
A sprig upon the chandelier
Says to the maidens, "Come not
here!"
Even the pauper of the earth
Some kindly gift has cheered to
mirth!

Within his chamber, dim and cold,
There sits a grasping miser old.
He has no thought save one of
gain,—
To grind and gather and grasp
and drain.
A peal of bells, a merry shout
Assail his ear: he gazes out
Upon a world to him all gray,

And snarls, "Why, this is Christ-
mas Day!"

No, man of ice,—for shame, for
shame!
For "Christmas Day" is no mere
name.
No, not for you this ringing cheer,
This festal season of the year.
And not for you the chime of bells
From holy temple rolls and swells.
In day and deed he has no part —
Who holds not Christmas in his
heart!

THE KING IS DEAD

Aye, lay him in his grave, the old
dead year!
His life is lived — fulfilled his
destiny.
Have you for him no sad, regret-
ful tear
To drop beside the cold, unfol-
lowed bier?
Can you not pay the tribute of a
sigh?

Was he not kind to you, this dead
old year?
Did he not give enough of earthly
store?
Enough of love, and laughter, and
good cheer?
Have not the skies you scanned
sometimes been clear?

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

How, then, of him who dies, could
you ask more?

It is not well to hate him for the
pain

He brought you, and the sorrows
manifold.

To pardon him these hurts still I
am fain;

For in the panting period of his
reign,

He brought me new wounds, but
he healed the old.

One little sigh for thee, my poor,
dead friend —

One little sigh while my com-
panions sing.

Thou art so soon forgotten in the
end;

We cry e'en as thy footsteps down-
ward tend:

“The king is dead! long live the
king!”

THEOLOGY

THERE is a heaven, for ever, day
by day,

The upward longing of my soul
doth tell me so.

There is a hell, I'm quite as sure;
for pray,

If there were not, where would
my neighbours go?

RESIGNATION

LONG had I grieved at what I
deemed abuse;

But now I am as grain within
the mill.

If so be thou must crush me for
thy use,

Grind on, O potent God, and
do thy will!

LOVE'S HUMILITY

As some rapt gazer on the lowly
earth,

Looks up to radiant planets,
ranging far,

So I, whose soul doth know thy
wondrous worth

Look longing up to thee as to a
star.

PRECEDENT

THE poor man went to the rich
man's doors,

“I come as Lazarus came,” he
said.

The rich man turned with humble
head,—

“I will send my dogs to lick your
sores!”

SHE TOLD HER BEADS

SHE told her beads with down-
cast eyes,

Within the ancient chapel dim;
And ever as her fingers slim

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Slipt o'er th' insensate ivories,
My rapt soul followed, spaniel-
wise.

Ah, many were the beads she wore;
But as she told them o'er and
o'er,

They did not number all my sighs.
My heart was filled with unvoiced
cries

And prayers and pleadings un-
expressed;

But while I burned with Love's
unrest,

She told her beads with down-
cast eyes.

LITTLE LUCY LANDMAN

OH, the day has set me dreaming
In a strange, half solemn way
Of the feelings I experienced

On another long past day,—
Of the way my heart made music
When the buds began to blow,
And o' little Lucy Landman
Whom I loved long years ago.

It's in spring, the poet tells us,
That we turn to thoughts of
love,

And our hearts go out a-wooing
With the lapwing and the dove.
But whene'er the soul goes seeking
Its twin-soul, upon the wing,
I've a notion, backed by mem'ry,
That it's love that makes the
spring.

I have heard a robin singing
When the boughs were brown
and bare,

And the chilling hand of winter
Scattered jewels through the air.
And in spite of dates and seasons,

It was always spring, I know,
When I loved Lucy Landman
In the days of long ago.

Ah, my little Lucy Landman,
I remember you as well
As if 't were only yesterday
I strove your thoughts to tell,—
When I tilted back your bonnet,
Looked into your eyes so true,
Just to see if you were loving
Me as I was loving you.

Ah, my little Lucy Landman
It is true it was denied
You should see a fuller summer
And an autumn by my side.
But the glance of love's sweet sun-
light
Which your eyes that morning
gave
Has kept spring within my bosom,
Though you lie within the
grave.

THE GOURD

IN the heavy earth the miner
Toiled and laboured day by day,
Wrenching from the miser moun-
tain
Brilliant treasure where it lay.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

And the artist worn and weary
Wrought with labour manifold
That the king might drink his
nectar
From a goblet made of gold.

On the prince's groaning table
Mid the silver gleaming bright
Mirroring the happy faces
Giving back the flaming light,
Shine the cups of priceless crystal
Chased with many a lovely line,
Glowing now with warmer colour,
Crimsoned by the ruby wine.

In a valley sweet with sunlight,
Fertile with the dew and rain,
Without miner's daily labour,
Without artist's nightly pain,
There there grows the cup I drink
from,
Summer's sweetness in it stored,
And my lips pronounce a blessing
As they touch an old brown
gourd.

Why, the miracle at Cana
In the land of Galilee,
Tho' it puzzles all the scholars,
Is no longer strange to me.
For the poorest and the humblest
Could a priceless wine afford,
If they'd only dip up water
With a sunlight-seasoned gourd.

So a health to my old comrade,
And a song of praise to sing

When he rests inviting kisses
In his place beside the spring.
Give the king his golden goblets,
Give the prince his crystal
hoard;
But for me the sparkling water
From a brown and brimming
gourd!

THE KNIGHT

OUR good knight, Ted, girds his
broadsword on
(And he wields it well, I
ween);
He's on his steed, and away has
gone
To the fight for king and queen.
What tho' no edge the broadsword
hath?
What tho' the blade be made of
lath?
'T is a valiant hand
That wields the brand,
So, foeman, clear the path!

He prances off at a goodly pace;
'T is a noble steed he rides,
That bears as well in the speedy
race
As he bears in battle-tides.
What tho' 't is but a rocking-chair
That prances with this stately air?
'T is a warrior bold
The reins doth hold,
Who bids all foes beware!

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

THOU ART MY LUTE

THOU art my lute, by thee I
sing,—

My being is attuned to thee.
Thou settest all my words a-wing,
And meltest me to melody.

Thou art my life, by thee I live,
From thee proceed the joys I
know;
Sweetheart, thy hand has power
to give
The meed of love — the cup of
woe.

Thou art my love, by thee I lead
My soul the paths of light along,
From vale to vale, from mead to
mead,
And home it in the hills of song.

My song, my soul, my life, my all,
Why need I pray or make my
plea,
Since my petition cannot fall;
For I'm already one with thee!

THE PHANTOM KISS

ONE night in my room, still and
beamless,
With will and with thought in
eclipse,
I rested in sleep that was dream-
less;
When softly there fell on my
lips

A touch, as of lips that were press-
ing

Mine own with the message of
bliss —

A sudden, soft, fleeting caressing,
A breath like a maiden's first
kiss.

I woke — and the scoffer may
doubt me —

I peered in surprise through the
gloom;

But nothing and none were about
me,

And I was alone in my room.

Perhaps 't was the wind that
caressed me

And touched me with dew-laden
breath;

Or, maybe, close-sweeping, there
passed me

The low-winged Angel of
Death.

Some sceptic may choose to dis-
dain it,

Or one feign to read it aright;
Or wisdom may seek to explain
it —

This mystical kiss in the night.

But rather let fancy thus clear it:
That, thinking of me here alone,
The miles were made naught, and,
in spirit,

Thy lips, love, were laid on
mine own.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

COMMUNION

IN the silence of my heart,
I will spend an hour with thee,
When my love shall rend apart
All the veil of mystery:

All that dim and misty veil
That shut in between our souls
When Death cried, "Ho, maiden,
hail!"
And your barque sped on the
shoals.

On the shoals? Nay, wrongly
said.
On the breeze of Death that
sweeps
Far from life, thy soul has sped
Out into unsounded deeps.

I shall take an hour and come
Sailing, darling, to thy side.
Wind nor sea may keep me from
Soft communings with my bride.

I shall rest my head on thee
As I did long days of yore,
When a calm, untroubled sea
Rocked thy vessel at the shore.

I shall take thy hand in mine,
And live o'er the olden days
When thy smile to me was wine,—
Golden wine thy word of praise,

For the carols I had wrought
In my soul's simplicity;

For the petty beads of thought
Which thine eyes alone could
see.

Ah, those eyes, love-blind, but keen
For my welfare and my weal!
Tho' the grave-door shut between,
Still their love-lights o'er me
steal.

I can see thee thro' my tears,
As thro' rain we see the sun.
What tho' cold and cooling years
Shall their bitter courses run,—

I shall see thee still and be
Thy true lover evermore,
And thy face shall be to me
Dear and helpful as before.

Death may vaunt and Death may
boast,
But we laugh his pow'r to
scorn;
He is but a slave at most,—
Night that heralds coming morn.

I shall spend an hour with thee
Day by day, my little bride.
True love laughs at mystery,
Crying, "Doors of Death, fly
wide."

MARE RUBRUM

IN Life's Red Sea with faith I
plant my feet,
And wait the sound of that sus-
taining word

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Which long ago the men of
Israel heard,
When Pharaoh's host behind them,
fierce and fleet,
Raged on, consuming with re-
vengeful heat.

Why are the barrier waters
still unstirred? —
That struggling faith may die
of hope deferred?
Is God not sitting in His ancient
seat?

The billows swirl above my trem-
bling limbs,
And almost chill my anxious
heart to doubt
And disbelief, long conquered
and defied.
But tho' the music of my hopeful
hymns
Is drowned by curses of the rag-
ing rout,
No voice yet bids th' opposing
waves divide!

IN AN ENGLISH GARDEN

IN this old garden, fair, I walk
to-day
Heart-charmed with all the
beauty of the scene:
The rich, luxuriant grasses'
cooling green,
The wall's environ, ivy-decked and
gray,

The waving branches with the
wind at play,
The slight and tremulous
blossoms that show between,
Sweet all: and yet my yearning
heart doth lean
Toward Love's Egyptian flesh-
pots far away.

Beside the wall, the slim Labur-
num grows
And flings its golden flow'rs to
every breeze.
But e'en among such soothing
sights as these,
I pant and nurse my soul-devour-
ing woes.
Of all the longings that our
hearts wot of,
There is no hunger like the want
of love!

THE CRISIS

A MAN of low degree was sore op-
pressed,
Fate held him under iron-handed
sway,
And ever, those who saw him
thus distressed
Would bid him bend his stub-
born will and pray.
But he, strong in himself and ob-
durate,
Waged, prayerless, on his losing
fight with Fate.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

Friends gave his proffered hand
their coldest clasp,
Or took it not at all; and Poverty,
That bruised his body with relentless grasp,
Grinned, taunting, when he
struggled to be free.
But though with helpless hands he
beat the air,
His need extreme yet found no
voice in prayer.

Then he prevailed; and forthwith
snobbish Fate,
Like some whipped cur, came
fawning at his feet;
Those who had scorned forgave
and called him great —
His friends found out that
friendship still was sweet.
But he, once obdurate, now bowed
his head
In prayer, and trembling with its
import, said:

“ Mere human strength may stand
ill-fortune's frown;
So I prevailed, for human
strength was mine;
But from the killing pow'r of
great renown,
Naught may protect me save a
strength divine.
Help me, O Lord, in this my
trembling cause;
I scorn men's curses, but I dread
applause!”

THE CONQUERORS

THE BLACK TROOPS IN CUBA

ROUND the wide earth, from the
red field your valour has won,
Blown with the breath of the far-
speaking gun,
Goes the word.
Bravely you spoke through the bat-
tle cloud heavy and dun.
Tossed though the speech toward
the mist-hidden sun,
The world heard.

Hell would have shrunk from you
seeking it fresh from the fray,
Grim with the dust of the battle,
and gray
From the fight.
Heaven would have crowned you,
with crowns not of gold but
of bay,
Owning you fit for the light of
her day,
Men of night.

Far through the cycle of years and
of lives that shall come,
There shall speak voices long muf-
fled and dumb,
Out of fear.
And through the noises of trade
and the turbulent hum,
Truth shall rise over the militant
drum,
Loud and clear.

Then on the cheek of the honester
nation that grows,

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

All for their love of you, not for
your woes,

There shall lie
Tears that shall be to your souls as
the dew to the rose;
Afterward thanks, that the pres-
ent yet knows
Not to ply!

ALEXANDER CRUMMELL — DEAD

BACK to the breast of thy mother,
Child of the earth!
E'en her caress can not smother
What thou hast done.
Follow the trail of the westering
sun

Over the earth.
Thy light and his were as one —
Sun, in thy worth.
Unto a nation whose sky was as
night,
Camest thou, holily, bearing thy
light:
And the dawn came,
In it thy fame
Flashed up in a flame.

Back to the breast of thy mother —
To rest.
Long hast thou striven;
Dared where the hills by the light-
ning of heaven were riven;
Go now, pure shriven.
Who shall come after thee, out of
the clay —

Learned one and leader to show
us the way?

Who shall rise up when the world
gives the test?

Think thou no more of this —
Rest!

WHEN ALL IS DONE

WHEN all is done, and my last
word is said,
And ye who loved me murmur,
"He is dead,"

Let no one weep, for fear that I
should know,
And sorrow too that ye should
sorrow so.

When all is done and in the ooz-
ing clay,
Ye lay this cast-off hull of mine
away,
Pray not for me, for, after long
despair,
The quiet of the grave will be a
prayer.

For I have suffered loss and
grievous pain,
The hurts of hatred and the
world's disdain,
And wounds so deep that love,
well-tried and pure,
Had not the pow'r to ease them
or to cure.

When all is done, say not my day
is o'er,

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

And that thro' night I seek a dim-
mer shore:

Say rather that my morn has just
begun,—

I greet the dawn and not a setting
sun,

When all is done.

THE POET AND THE BABY

How's a man to write a sonnet,
can you tell,—

How 's he going to weave the dim,
poetic spell,—

When a-toddling on the floor

Is the muse he must adore,

And this muse he loves, not
wisely, but too well?

Now, to write a sonnet, every one
allows,

One must always be as quiet as a
mouse;

But to write one seems to me

Quite superfluous to be,

When you've got a little sonnet
in the house.

Just a dainty little poem, true and
fine,

That is full of love and life in
every line,

Earnest, delicate, and sweet,

Altogether so complete

That I wonder what's the use of
writing mine.

DISTINCTION

"I AM but clay," the sinner plead,
Who fed each vain desire.

"Not only clay," another said,

"But worse, for thou art mire."

THE SUM

A LITTLE dreaming by the way,

A little toiling day by day;

A little pain, a little strife,

A little joy,—and that is life.

A little short-lived summer's
morn,

When joy seems all so newly born,

When one day's sky is blue above,

And one bird sings,—and that is
love.

A little sickening of the years,

The tribute of a few hot tears

Two folded hands, the failing
breath,

And peace at last,—and that is
death.

Just dreaming, loving, dying so,

The actors in the drama go—

A fitting picture on a wall,

Love, Death, the themes; but is
that all?

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

SONNET

ON AN OLD BOOK WITH UNCUT
LEAVES

EMBLEM of blasted hope and lost
desire,

No finger ever traced thy yellow
page

Save Time's. Thou hast not
wrought to noble rage

The hearts thou wouldst have
stirred. Not any fire

Save sad flames set to light a funeral
pyre

Dost thou suggest. Nay,—im-
potent in age,

Unsought, thou holdst a corner
of the stage

And ceasest even dumbly to aspire.

How different was the thought of
him that writ.

What promised he to love of
ease and wealth,

When men should read and kin-
dle at his wit.

But here decay eats up the book
by stealth,

While it, like some old maiden,
solemnly,

Hugs its incongruous virginity!

ON THE SEA WALL

I sit upon the old sea wall,

And watch the shimmering sea,

Where soft and white the moon-
beams fall,

Till, in a fantasy,

Some pure white maiden's funeral
pall

The strange light seems to me.

The waters break upon the shore
And shiver at my feet,

While I dream old dreams o'er
and o'er,

And dim old scenes repeat;
Tho' all have dreamed the same
before,

They still seem new and sweet.

The waves still sing the same old
song

That knew an elder time;
The breakers' beat is not more
strong,

Their music more sublime;
And poets thro' the ages long
Have set these notes to rhyme.

But this shall not deter my lyre,
Nor check my simple strain;

If I have not the old-time fire,
I know the ancient pain:
The hurt of unfulfilled desire,—
The ember quenched by rain.

I know the softly shining sea
That rolls this gentle swell
Has snarled and licked its tongues
at me

And bared its fangs as well;
That 'neath its smile so heavenly,
There lurks the scowl of hell!

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

But what of that? I strike my
string

(For songs in youth are sweet);
I'll wait and hear the waters
bring

Their loud resounding beat;
Then, in her own bold numbers
sing

The Ocean's dear deceit!

But far and strange, thou still
dost make them fair.

Now thou dost sing, and I am lost
in thee

As one who drowns
In floods of melody.

Still in thy art
Give me this part,
Till perfect love, the love of lov-
ing crowns.

TO A LADY PLAYING THE HARP

THY tones are silver melted into
sound,

And as I dream
I see no walls around,

But seem to hear

A gondolier
Sing sweetly down some slow Ve-
netian stream.

Italian skies — that I have never
seen —

I see above.
(Ah, play again, my queen;

Thy fingers white
Fly swift and light
And weave for me the golden
mesh of love.)

Oh, thou dusk sorceress of the
dusky eyes

And soft dark hair,
'Tis thou that mak'st my skies
So swift to change
To far and strange;

CONFESSIONAL

SEARCH thou my heart;
If there be guile,
It shall depart
Before thy smile.

Search thou my soul;
Be there deceit,
'T will vanish whole
Before thee, sweet.

Upon my mind
Turn thy pure lens;
Naught shalt thou find
Thou canst not cleanse.

If I should pray,
I scarcely know
In just what way
My prayers would go.

So strong in me
I feel love's leaven,
I'd bow to thee
As soon as Heaven!

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

MISAPPREHENSION

OUT of my heart, one day, I
wrote a song,
With my heart's blood imbued,
Instinct with passion, tremulously
strong,
With grief subdued;
Breathing a fortitude
Pain-bought.
And one who claimed much love
for what I wrought,
Read and considered it,
And spoke:
"Ay, brother,—'t is well writ,
But where's the joke?"

PROMETHEUS

PROMETHEUS stole from Heaven
the sacred fire
And swept to earth with it o'er
land and sea.
He lit the vestal flames of poesy,
Content, for this, to brave celestial ire.

Wroth were the gods, and with
eternal hate
Pursued the fearless one who
ravished Heaven
That earth might hold in fee
the perfect leaven
To lift men's souls above their
low estate.
But judge you now, when poets
wield the pen,

Think you not well the wrong
has been repaired?
'T was all in vain that ill Prometheus fared:
The fire has been returned to
Heaven again!

We have no singers like the ones
whose note
Gave challenge to the noblest
warbler's song.
We have no voice so mellow,
sweet, and strong
As that which broke from Shelley's
golden throat.

The measure of our songs is our
desires:
We tinkle where old poets used
to storm.
We lack their substance tho' we
keep their form:
We strum our banjo-strings and
call them lyres.

LOVE'S PHASES

LOVE hath the wings of the butterfly,
Oh, clasp him but gently,
Pausing and dipping and fluttering by
Inconsequently.
Stir not his poise with the breath
of a sigh;
Love hath the wings of the butterfly.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

Love hath the wings of the eagle
bold,

Cling to him strongly —
What if the look of the world be
cold,

And life go wrongly?
Rest on his pinions, for broad is
their fold;

Love hath the wings of the eagle
bold.

Love hath the voice of the nightin-
gale,

Hearken his trilling —
List to his song when the moon-
light is pale,—

Passionate, thrilling.
Cherish the lay, ere the lilt of it
fail;

Love hath the voice of the nightin-
gale.

Love hath the voice of the storm
at night,

Wildly defiant.
Hear him and yield up your soul
to his might,

Tenderly pliant.
None shall regret him who heed
him aright;

Love hath the voice of the storm
at night.

FOR THE MAN WHO FAILS

THE world is a snob, and the man
who wins

Is the chap for its money's
worth:

And the lust for success causes
half of the sins

That are cursing this brave old
earth.

For it's fine to go up, and the
world's applause

Is sweet to the mortal ear;
But the man who fails in a noble
cause

Is a hero that's no less dear.

'Tis true enough that the laurel
crown

Twines but for the victor's
brow;

For many a hero has lain him
down

With naught but the cypress
bough.

There are gallant men in the los-
ing fight,

And as gallant deeds are done
As ever graced the captured
height

Or the battle grandly won.

We sit at life's board with our
nerves highstrung,

And we play for the stake of
Fame,

And our odes are sung and our
banners hung

For the man who wins the
game.

But I have a song of another kind

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Than breathes in these fame-
wrought gales,—
An ode to the noble heart and
mind
Of the gallant man who fails!

The man who is strong to fight his
fight,
And whose will no front can
daunt,
If the truth be truth and the right
be right,
Is the man that the ages want.
Tho' he fail and die in grim de-
feat,
Yet he has not fled the strife,
And the house of Earth will seem
more sweet
For the perfume of his life.

HARRIET BEECHER STOWE

SHE told the story, and the whole
world wept
At wrongs and cruelties it had
not known
But for this fearless woman's
voice alone.
She spoke to consciences that
long had slept:
Her message, Freedom's clear
reveille, swept
From heedless hovel to compla-
cent throne.
Command and prophecy were
in the tone

And from its sheath the sword
of justice leapt.
Around two peoples swelled a
fiery wave,
But both came forth transfig-
ured from the flame.
Blest be the hand that dared be
strong to save,
And blest be she who in our
weakness came —
Prophet and priestess! At one
stroke she gave
A race to freedom and herself
to fame.

VAGRANTS

LONG time ago, we two set out,
My soul and I.
I know not why,
For all our way was dim with
doubt.
I know not where
We two may fare:
Though still with every changing
weather,
We wander, groping on together.
We do not love, we are not
friends,
My soul and I.
He lives a lie;
Untruth lines every way he wends.
A scoffer he
Who jeers at me:

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

And so, my comrade and my
brother,
We wander on and hate each
other.

Ay, there be taverns and to spare,
Beside the road;
But some strange goad
Lets me not stop to taste their
fare.

Knew I the goal
Toward which my soul
And I made way, hope made life
fragrant:
But no. We wander, aimless, va-
grant!

A WINTER'S DAY

ACROSS the hills and down the
narrow ways,
And up the valley where the
free winds sweep,
The earth is folded in an er-
mined sleep
That mocks the melting mirth of
myriad Mays.
Departed her disheartening duns
and grays,
And all her crusty black is cov-
ered deep.
Dark streams are locked in
Winter's donjon-keep,
And made to shine with keen, un-
wonted rays.

O icy mantle, and deceitful snow!
What world-old liars in your
hearts ye are!
Are there not still the darkened
seam and scar
Beneath the brightness that you
fain would show?
Come from the cover with thy
blot and blur,
O reeking Earth, thou whited
sepulchre!

MY LITTLE MARCH GIRL

COME to the pane, draw the cur-
tain apart,
There she is passing, the girl of
my heart;
See where she walks like a queen
in the street,
Weather-defying, calm, placid and
sweet.
Tripping along with impetuous
grace,
Joy of her life beaming out of her
face,
Tresses all truant-like, curl upon
curl,
Wind-blown and rosy, my little
March girl.
Hint of the violet's delicate
bloom,
Hint of the rose's pervading per-
fume!

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

How can the wind help from kissing
her face,—

Wrapping her round in his stormy
embrace?

But still serenely she laughs at his
rout,

She is the victor who wins in the
bout.

So may life's passions about her
soul swirl,

Leaving it placid,—my little
March girl.

What self-possession looks out of
her eyes!

What are the wild winds, and
what are the skies,

Frowning and glooming when,
brimming with life,

Cometh the little maid ripe for the
strife?

Ah! Wind, and bah! Wind, what
might have you now?

What can you do with that inno-
cent brow?

Blow, Wind, and grow, Wind,
and eddy and swirl,

But bring her to me, Wind,—my
little March girl.

The stars were out and the moon
it grew

From a wee soft glimmer way out
in the blue

To a bird thro' the heavens
winging.

She sang, and the song trembled
down to my breast,—

(It was sweet, so sweet the
singing.)

As a dove just out of its fledgling
nest,

And, putting its wings to the first
sweet test,

Flutters homeward so wearily
winging.

She sang and I said to my heart
"That song,

That was sweet, so sweet i' the
singing,

Shall live with us and inspire us
long,

And thou, my heart, shalt be brave
and strong

For the sake of those words
a-winging.

The woman died and the song
was still.

(It was sweet, so sweet, the
singing.)

But ever I hear the same low
trill,

Of the song that shakes my heart
with a thrill,

And goes forever winging.

REMEMBERED

SHE sang, and I listened the
whole song thro'.

(It was sweet, so sweet, the
singing.)

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

LOVE DESPOILED

As lone I sat one summer's day,
With mien dejected, Love
came by;
His face distraught, his locks
astray,
So slow his gait, so sad his eye,
I hailed him with a pitying cry:

"Pray, Love, what has disturbed
thee so?"
Said I, amazed. "Thou seem'st
bereft;
And see thy quiver hanging
low,—
What, not a single arrow left?
Pray, who is guilty of this
theft?"

Poor Love looked in my face and
cried:
"No thief were ever yet so bold
To rob my quiver at my side.
But Time, who rules, gave ear
to Gold,
And all my goodly shafts are
sold."

THE LAPSE

THIS poem must be done to-day;
Then, I'll e'en to it.
I must not dream my time away,—
I'm sure to rue it.
The day is rather bright, I know
The Muse will pardon

My half-defection, if I go
Into the garden.
It must be better working
there,—
I'm sure it's sweeter:
And something in the balmy air
May clear my metre.

[*In the Garden.*]

Ah this is noble, what a sky!
What breezes blowing!
The very clouds, I know not why,
Call one to rowing.
The stream will be a paradise
To-day, I'll warrant.
I know the tide that's on the rise
Will seem a torrent;
I know just how the leafy boughs
Are all a-quiver;
I know how many skiffs and scows
Are on the river.
I think I'll just go out awhile
Before I write it;
When Nature shows us such a
smile,
We should n't slight it.
For Nature always makes desire
By giving pleasure;
And so 't will help me put more
fire
Into my measure.

[*On the River.*]

The river's fine, I'm glad I came,
That poem's teasing;
But health is better far than fame,
Though cheques are pleasing.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

I don't know what I did it for,—
This air 's a poppy.
I'm sorry for my editor,—
He'll get no copy!

THE WARRIOR'S PRAYER

LONG since, in sore distress, I
heard one pray,
"Lord, who prevailest with re-
sistless might,
Ever from war and strife keep me
away,
My battles fight!"

I know not if I play the Pharisee,
And if my brother after all be
right;
But mine shall be the warrior's
plea to thee —
Strength for the fight.

I do not ask that thou shalt front
the fray,
And drive the warring foeman
from my sight;
I only ask, O Lord, by night, by
day,
Strength for the fight!

When foes upon me press, let me
not quail
Nor think to turn me into
coward flight.
I only ask, to make mine arms
prevail,
Strength for the fight!

Still let mine eyes look ever on the
foe,
Still let mine armor case me
strong and bright;
And grant me, as I deal each right-
eous blow,
Strength for the fight!

And when, at eventide, the fray
is done,
My soul to Death's bedchamber
do thou light,
And give me, be the field or lost
or won,
Rest from the fight!

FAREWELL TO ARCADY

WITH sombre mien, the Evening
gray
Comes nagging at the heels of
Day,
And driven faster and still faster
Before the dusky-mantled Master,
The light fades from her fearful
eyes,
She hastens, stumbles, falls, and
dies.

Beside me Amaryllis weeps;
The swelling tears obscure the
deeps
Of her dark eyes, as, mistily,
The rushing rain conceals the sea.
Here, lay my tuneless reed away,—
I have no heart to tempt a lay.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

I scent the perfume of the rose
Which by my crystal fountain
grows.

In this sad time, are roses blowing?
In this sad time, are roses blowing?

And thou, my fountain, art thou
flowing,

While I who watched thy waters
spring

Am all too sad to smile or sing?

Nay, give me back my pipe again,
It yet shall breathe this single
strain:

Farewell to Arcady!

THE VOICE OF THE BANJO

In a small and lonely cabin out
of noisy traffic's way,

Sat an old man, bent and feeble,
dusk of face, and hair of gray,

And beside him on the table, battered,
old, and worn as he,

Lay a banjo, droning forth this
reminiscent melody:

"Night is closing in upon us,
friend of mine, but don't be
sad;

Let us think of all the pleasures
and the joys that we have had.

Let us keep a merry visage, and be
happy till the last,

Let the future still be sweetened
with the honey of the past.

"For I speak to you of summer
nights upon the yellow sand,
When the Southern moon was
sailing high and silvering all
the land;

And if love tales were not sacred,
there's a tale that I could
tell

Of your many nightly wanderings
with a dusk and lovely belle.

"And I speak to you of care-free
songs when labour's hour was
o'er,

And a woman waiting for your
step outside the cabin door,
And of something roly-poly that
you took upon your lap,

While you listened for the stum-
bling, hesitating words, 'Pap,
pap.'

"I could tell you of a 'possum
hunt across the wooded
grounds,

I could call to mind the sweetness
of the baying of the hounds,
You could lift me up and smelling
of the timber that's in me,
Build again a whole green forest
with the mem'ry of a tree.

"So the future cannot hurt us
while we keep the past in
mind,

What care I for trembling fingers,
— what care you that you are
blind?

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Time may leave us poor and
stranded, circumstance may
make us bend;
But they'll only find us mellower,
won't they, comrade? — in
the end."

THE STIRRUP CUP

COME, drink a stirrup cup with me,
Before we close our rouse.
You're all aglow with wine, I
know:

The master of the house,
Unmindful of our revelry,
Has drowned the carking devil
care,
And slumbers in his chair.

Come, drink a cup before we start;
We've far to ride to-night.
And Death may take the race we
make,
And check our gallant flight:
But even he must play his part,
And tho' the look he wears be
grim,
We'll drink a toast to him!

For Death,— a swift old chap is
he,

And swift the steed He rides.
He needs no chart o'er main or
mart,

For no direction bides.
So, come, a final cup with me,
And let the soldiers' chorus
swell,—

To hell with care, to hell!

A CHOICE

THEY please me not — these
solemn songs

That hint of sermons covered up.
'T is true the world should heed
its wrongs,

But in a poem let me sup,
Not simples brewed to cure or
ease

Humanity's confessed disease,
But the spirit-wine of a singing
line,

Or a dew-drop in a honey cup!

HUMOUR AND DIALECT

THEN AND NOW

THEN

HE loved her, and through many
years,
Had paid his fair devoted court,
Until she wearied, and with sneers
Turned all his ardent love to sport.

That night within his chamber
lone,
He long sat writing by his bed
A note in which his heart made
moan
For love; the morning found him
dead.

NOW

Like him, a man of later day
Was jilted by the maid he sought,
And from her presence turned
away,
Consumed by burning, bitter
thought.

He sought his room to write — a
curse
Like him before and die, I ween.
Ah no, he put his woes in verse,
And sold them to a magazine.

AT CHESHIRE CHEESE

WHEN first of wise old Johnson
taught,
My youthful mind its homage
brought,

And made the pond'rous crusty
sage

The object of a noble rage.

Nor did I think (How dense we
are!)

That any day, however far,
Would find me holding, unre-
pelled,
The place that Doctor Johnson
held!

But change has come and time has
moved,

And now, applauded, unreprieved,
I hold, with pardonable pride,
The place that Johnson occupied.

Conceit! Presumption! What is
this?

You surely read my words amiss;
Like Johnson I,— a man of mind!
How could you ever be so blind?

No. At the ancient "Cheshire
Cheese,"

Blown hither by some vagrant
breeze,

To dignify my shallow wit,
In Doctor Johnson's seat I sit!

MY CORN-COB PIPE

Men may sing of their Havanas,
elevating to the stars
The real or fancied virtues of their
foreign-made cigars;

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

But I worship Nicotina at a different sort of shrine,
And she sits enthroned in glory in
this corn-cob pipe of mine.

It's as fragrant as the meadows
when the clover is in bloom;
It's as dainty as the essence of the
daintiest perfume;

It's as sweet as are the orchards
when the fruit is hanging ripe,
With the sun's warm kiss upon
them — is this corn-cob pipe.

Thro' the smoke about it clinging,
I delight its form to trace,
Like an oriental beauty with a veil
upon her face;

And my room is dim with vapour
as a church when censers
sway,

As I clasp it to my bosom — in a
figurative way.

It consoles me in misfortune and
it cheers me in distress,

And it proves a warm partaker of
my pleasures in success;

So I hail it as a symbol, friendship's
true and worthy type,

And I press my lips devoutly to
my corn-cob pipe.

IN AUGUST

WHEN August days are hot an'
dry,

When burning copper is the sky,

I'd rather fish than feast or fly
In airy realms serene and high.

I'd take a suit not made for looks,
Some easily digested books,
Some flies, some lines, some bait,
some hooks,
Then would I seek the bays and
brooks.

I would eschew mine every task,
In Nature's smiles my soul should
bask,

And I methinks no more could
ask,

Except — perhaps — one little
flask.

In case of accident, you know,
Or should the wind come on to
blow,

Or I be chilled or capsized, so,
A flask would be the only go.

Then could I spend a happy
time,—

A bit of sport, a bit of rhyme
(A bit of lemon, or of lime,
To make my bottle's contents
prime).

When August days are hot an'
dry,

I won't sit by an' sigh or die,
I'll get my bottle (on the sly)
And go ahead, and fish, and lie!

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

THE DISTURBER

OH, what shall I do? I am wholly
upset;

I am sure I'll be jailed for a
lunatic yet.

I'll be out of a job—it's the
thing to expect

When I'm letting my duty go by
with neglect.

You may judge the extent and de-
gree of my plight

When I'm thinking all day and
a-dreaming all night,

And a-trying my hand at a rhyme
on the sly,

All on account of a sparkling eye.

There are those who say men
should be strong, well-a-day!

But what constitutes strength in
a man? Who shall say?

I am strong as the most when it
comes to the arm.

I have aye held my own on the
playground or farm.

And when I've been tempted, I
have n't been weak;

But now—why, I tremble to
hear a maid speak.

I used to be bold, but now I've
grown shy,

And all on account of a sparkling
eye.

There once was a time when my
heart was devout,

But now my religion is open to
doubt.

When parson is earnestly preach-
ing of grace,

My fancy is busy with drawing
a face,

Thro' the back of a bonnet most
piously plain;

'I draw it, redraw it, and draw
it again.'

While the songs and the sermon
unheeded go by,—

All on account of a sparkling eye.

Oh, dear little conjurer, give o'er
your wiles,

It is easy for you, you're all
blushes and smiles:

But, love of my heart, I am sorely
perplexed;

I am smiling one minute and sigh-
ing the next;

And if it goes on, I'll drop hackle
and flail,

And go to the parson and tell him
my tale.

I warrant he'll find me a cure
for the sigh

That you're aye bringing forth
with the glance of your eye.

EXPECTATION

YOU 'LL be wonderin' whut's de
reason

I's a grinnin' all de time,

An' I guess you t'ink my sperits

Mus' be feelin' mighty prime.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

Well, I 'fess up, I is tickled
 As a puppy at his paws.
 But you need n't think I's crazy,
 I ain' laffin' 'dout a cause.

You's a wonderin' too, I reckon,
 Why I does n't seem to eat,
 An' I notice you a lookin'
 Lak you felt completely beat
 When I 'fuse to tek de bacon,
 An' don' settle on de ham.
 Don' you feel no feah erbout me,
 Jes' keep eatin', an' be ca'm.

Fu' I's waitin' an' I's watchin'
 'Bout a little t'ing I see —
 D' othah night I's out a walkin'
 An' I passed a 'simmon tree.
 Now I's whettin' up my hongry,
 An' I's laffin' fit to kill,
 Fu' de fros' done turned de 'sim-
 mons,
 An' de possum 's eat his fill.

He done go'ged hisse'f owdacious,
 An' he stayin' by de tree!
 Don' you know, ol' Mistah Pos-
 sum

Dat you gittin' fat fu' me?
 'Tain't no use to try to 'spute it,
 'Case I knows you's gittin'
 sweet
 Wif dat 'simmon flavoh thoo you,
 So I's waitin' fu' yo' meat.

An' some ebenin' me an' Towsah
 Gwine to come an' mek a call,

We jes' drap in onexpected
 Fu' to shek yo' han', dat's all.
 Oh, I knows dat you'll be tickled,
 Seems lak I kin see you smile,
 So pu'haps I mought pu'suade you
 Fu' to visit us a while.

LOVER'S LANE

SUMMAH night an' sighin' breeze,
 'Long de loyah's lane;
 Frien'ly, shadder-mekin' trees,
 'Long de lovah's lane.
 White folks' wo'k all done up
 gran'—
 Me an' 'Mandy han'-in-han'
 Struttin' lak we owned de lan',
 'Long de lovah's lane.

Owl a-settin' 'side de road,
 'Long de lovah's lane,
 Lookin' at us lak he knowed
 Dis uz lovah's lane.
 Go on, hoot yo' mou'nful tune,
 You ain' nevah loved in June,
 An' come hidin' f'om de moon
 Down in lovah's lane.

Bush it ben' an' nod an' sway,
 Down in lovah's lane,
 Try'n' to hyeah me whut I say
 'Long de lovah's lane.
 But I whispahs low lak dis,
 An' my 'Mandy smile huh bliss —
 Mistah Bush he shek his fis',
 Down in lovah's lane.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Whut I keer ef day is long,
Down in lovah's lane.
I kin allus sing a song
'Long de lovah's lane.
An' de wo'ds I hyeah an' say
Meks up fu' de weary day
W'en I's strollin' by de way,
Down in lovah's lane.

An' dis t'ought will allus rise
Down in lovah's lane;
Wondah whethah in de skies
Dey's a lovah's lane.
Ef dey ain't, I tell you true,
'Ligion do look mighty blue,
'Cause I do' know whut I'd do
'Dout a lovah's lane.

PROTEST

WHO say my hea't ain't true to
you?

Dey bettah heish dey mouf.
I knows I loves you thoo an' thoo
In watah time er drouf.
I wush dese people'd stop dey
talkin',
Don't mean no mo' dan chicken's
squawkin':
I guess I knows which way I's
walkin',
I knows de norf f'om souf.

I does not love Elizy Brown,
I guess I knows my min'.
You allus try to tek me down
Wid evah'ting you fin'.

Ef dese hyeah folks will keep on
fillin'
Yo' haid wid nonsense, an' you's
willin'

I bet some day dey'll be a killin'
Somewhah along de line.

O' cose I buys de gal ice-cream,
Whut else I gwine to do?
I knows jes' how de t'ing 'u'd
seem

Ef I'd be sho't wid you.,
On Sunday, you's at chu'ch
a-shoutin',
Den all de week you go 'roun'
poutin'—

I's mighty tiahed o' all dis
doubtin',
I tell you cause I's true.

HYMN

O LI'L' lamb out in de col',
De Mastah call you to de fol',
O li'l' lamb!
He hyeah you bleatin' on de hill;
Come hyeah an' keep yo' mou'nin'
still,
O li'l' lamb!

De Mastah sen' de Shepud fo'f;
He wandah souf, he wandah no'f,
O li'l' lamb!
He wandah eas', he wandah
wes';
De win' a-wrenchin' at his breas',
O li'l' lamb!

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

Oh, tell de Shepud whaih you hide;
He want you walkin' by his side,
O li'l' lamb!

He know you weak, he know you
so';

But come, don' stay away no mo',
O li'l' lamb!

An' af'ah while de lamb he hyeah
De Shepud's voice a-callin' cleah —
Sweet li'l' lamb!

He ansawah f'om de brambles thick,
"O Shepud, I 's a-comin' quick" —
O li'l' lamb!

LITTLE BROWN BABY

LITTLE brown baby wif spa'klin'
eyes,

Come to yo' pappy an' set on his
knee.

What you been doin', suh — mak-
in' san' pies?

Look at dat bib — you's ez
du'ty ez me.

Look at dat mouf — dat's mer-
lasses, I bet;

Come hyeah, Maria, an' wipe
off his han's.

Bees gwine to ketch you an' eat
you up yit,

Bein' so sticky an sweet — good-
ness lan's!

Little brown baby wif spa'klin'
eyes,

Who's pappy's darlin' an'
who's pappy's chile?

Who is it all de day nevah once
tries

Fu' to be cross, er once loses dat
smile?

Whah did you git dem teef? My,
you's a scamp!

Whah did dat dimple come f'om
in yo' chin?

Pappy do' know you — I b'lieves
you's a tramp;

Mammy, dis hyeah's some ol'
straggler got in!

Let's th'ow him outen de do' in
de san',

We do' want stragglers a-layin'
'roun' hyeah;

Let's gin him 'way to de big
buggah-man;

I know he's hidin' erroun'
hyeah right neah.

Buggah-man, buggah-man, come
in de do',

Hyeh's a bad boy you kin have
fu' to eat.

Mammy an' pappy do' want him
no mo',

Swaller him down f'om his haid
to his feet!

Dah, now, I t'ought dat you'd
hug me up close.

Go back, ol' buggah, you sha'n't
have dis boy.

He ain't no tramp, ner no strag-
gler, of co'se;

He's pappy's pa'dner an' play-
mate an' joy.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Come to you' pallet now — go to
yo' res';

Wisht you could allus know
ease an' cleah skies;

Wisht you could stay jes' a chile
on my breas'—

Little brown baby wif spa'klin'
eyes!

TIME TO TINKER 'ROUN'!

SUMMAH 's nice, wif sun a-shinin',
Spring is good wif greens and
grass,

An' dey's some t'ings nice 'bout
wintah,

Dough hit brings de freezin'
blas;

But de time dat is de fines',
Whethah fiel's is green er brown,
Is w'en de rain's a-po'in'

An' dey's time to tinker 'roun.

Den you men's de mule's ol'
ha'nness,

An' you men's de broken chair.
Hummin' all de time you 's wo'kin'
Some ol' common kind o' air.

Evah now an' then you looks out,
Tryin' mighty ha'd to frown,
But you cain't, you's glad hit's
rainin',

An' dey's time to tinker 'roun'.

Oh, you 'ten's lak you so anxious
Evah time it so't o' stops.

W'en hit goes on, den you reckon
Dat de wet 'll he'p de crops.

But hit ain't de crops you's aftah;
You knows w'en de rain comes
down

Dat's hit's too wet out fu'
wo'kin',

An' dey's time to tinker roun'.

Oh, dey's fun inside de co'n-crib,
An' dey's laffin' at de ba'n;

An' dey's allus some one jokin',
Er some one to tell a ya'n.

Dah's a quiet in yo' cabin,
Only fu' de rain's sof' soun';

So you's mighty blessed happy
W'en dey's time to tinker
'roun'!

THE REAL QUESTION

FOLKS is talkin' 'bout de money,
'bout de silvah an' de gold;
All de time de season's changin'
an' de days is gittin' cold.

An' dey's wond'rin' 'bout de
metals, whethah we'll have
one er two.

While de price o' coal is risin' an'
dey's two months' rent
dat's due.

Some folks says dat gold's de only
money dat is wuff de name,
Den de othahs rise an' tell 'em
dat dey ought to be ashame,

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

An' dat silvah is de only thing to
save us f'om de powah

Of de gold-bug ragin' 'roun' an'
seekin' who he may de-
vowah.

Well, you folks kin keep on
shoutin' wif yo' gold er
silvah cry,

But I tell you people hams is
sceerce an' fowls is roostin'
high.

An' hit ain't de so't o' money dat
is pesterin' my min',

But de question I want answehed's
how to get at any kin'!

JILTED

LUCY done gone back on me,
Dat's de way wif life.

Evaht'ing was movin' free,
T'ought I had my wife.

Den some dahky comes along,
Sings my gal a little song,
Since den, evaht'ing's gone wrong,
Evah day dey's strife.

Did n't answeh me to-day,
W'en I called huh name,
Would you t'ink she'd ac' dat way
W'en I ain't to blame?
Dat's de way dese women do,
W'en dey fin's a fellow true,
Den dey 'buse him thoo an' thoo;
Well, hit's all de same.

Somep'n's wrong erbout my lung,
An' I's glad hit's so.

Doctah says 'at I'll die young,

Well, I wants to go!
Whut's de use o' livin' hyeah,
W'en de gal you loves so deah,
Goes back on you clean an' cleah —
I sh'd like to know?

THE NEWS

WHUT dat you whisperin' keepin'
f'om me?

Don't shut me out 'cause I's ol'
an' can't see.

Somep'n's gone wrong dat's
a-causin' you dread,—

Don't be afeared to tell — Whut!
mastah dead?

Somebody brung de news early
to-day,—

One of de sojers he led, do you
say?

Did n't he foller whah ol' mastah
lead?

How kin he live w'en his leadah
is dead?

Let me lay down awhile, dah by
his bed;

I wants to t'ink,— hit ain't cleah
in my head:—

Killed while a-leadin' his men into
fight,—

Dat's whut you said, ain't it, did
I hyeah right?

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Mastah, my mastah, dead dah in
de fiel'?

Lif' me up some,—dah, jes' so I
kin kneel.

I was too weak to go wid him, dey
said,

Well, now I 'll — fin' him — so —
mastah is dead.

Yes, suh, I 's comin' ez fas' ez I
kin,—

'T was kin' o' da'k, but hit 's
lightah agin:

P'omised yo' pappy I 'd allus tek
keer

Of you,—yes, mastah,—I 's fol-
lerin',—hyeah!

CHRISMUS ON THE PLAN- TATION

It was Chrismus Eve, I mind hit
fu' a mighty gloomy day —

Bofe de weathah an' de people —
not a one of us was gay;

Cose you 'll t'ink dat 's mighty
funny 'twell I try to mek hit
cleah,

Fu' a da'ky 's allus happy when de
holidays is neah.

But we was n't, fu' dat mo'nin'
Mastah 'd tol' us we mus' go,

He 'd been payin' us sence free-
dom, but he could n't pay no
mo';

He wa'n't nevah used to plannin'
'fo' he got so po' an' ol',

So he gwine to give up tryin', an'
de homestead mus' be sol'.

I kin see him stan'in' now erpon
de step ez cleah ez day,

Wid de win' a-kind o' fondlin'
thoo his haih all thin an'
gray;

An' I 'membah how he trimbled
when he said, "It 's ha'd fu'
me,

Not to mek yo' Chrismus brightah,
but I 'low it wa'n't to be."

All de women was a-cryin', an' de
men, too, on de sly,

An' I noticed somep'n shinin' even
in ol' Mastah's eye.

But we all stood still to listen ez
ol' Ben come f'om de crowd

An' spoke up, a-try'n' to steady
down his voice and mek it
loud:—

"Look hyeah, Mastah, I 's been
servin' you' fu' lo! dese many
yeahs,

An' now, sence we 's got freedom
an' you 's kind o' po', hit
'pears

Dat you want us all to leave you
'cause you don't t'ink you can
pay.

Ef my membry has n't fooled me,
seem dat whut I hyead you
say.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

"Er in othah wo'ds, you wants us
to fu'git dat you 's been kin',
An' ez soon ez you is he'pless, we 's
to leave you hyeah behin'.

Well, ef dat 's de way dis freedom
ac's on people, white er black,
You kin jes' tell Mistah Lincum
fu' to tek his freedom back.

"We gwine wo'k dis ol' planta-
tion fu' whatevah we kin git,
Fu' I know hit did suppo't us, an'
de place kin do it yit.

Now de land is yo's, de hands is
ouahs, an' I reckon we 'll be
brave,

An' we 'll bah ez much ez you do
w'en we has to scrape an'
save."

Ol' Mastah stood dah trimblin',
but a-smilin' thoo his teahs,

An' den hit seemed jes' nachul-
like, de place fah rung wid
cheahs,

An' soon ez dey was quiet, some
one sta'ted sof' an' low:

"Praise God," an' den we all
jined in, "from whom all
blessin's flow!"

Well, dey was n't no use tryin',
ouah min's was sot to stay,

An' po' ol' Mastah could n't plead
ner baig, ner drive us 'way,

An' all at once, hit seemed to us,
de day was bright agin,

So evahone was gay dat night, an'
watched de Chrismus in.

ANGELINA

WHEN de fiddle gits to singin' out
a ol' Vahginny reel,

An' you 'mence to feel a ticklin' in
yo' toe an' in yo' heel;

Ef you t'ink you got 'uligion an'
you wants to keep it, too,

You jes' bettah tek a hint an' git
yo'self clean out o' view.

Case de time is mighty tempti-
when de chune is in de
swing,

Fu' a darky, saint or sinner man,
to cut de pigeon-wing.

An' you could n't he'p f'om danc-
in' ef yo' feet was boun' wif
twine,

When Angelina Johnson comes
a-swingin' down de line.

Don't you know Miss Angelina?
She 's de da'lin' of de place.

W'y, dey ain't no high-toned lady
wif sich mannahts an' sich
grace.

She kin move across de cabin, wif
its planks all rough an' wo';

Jes' de same 's ef she was dancin'
on ol' mistus' ball-room flo'.

Fact is, you do' see no cabin—
evaht'ing you see look grand,

An' dat one ol' squeaky fiddle
soun' to you jes' lak a ban';

Cotton britches look lak broadclof
an' a linsey dress look fine,

When Angelina Johnson comes
a-swingin' down de line.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Some folks say dat dancin' s sin-
ful, an' de blessed Lawd, dey
say,

Gwine to punish us fu' steppin'
w'en we hyeah de music play.

But I tell you I don' b'lieve it, fu'
de Lawd is wise and good,

An' he made de banjo's metal an'
he made de fiddle's wood,

An' he made de music in dem, so
I don' quite t'ink he'll keer

Ef our feet keeps time a little to
de melodies we hyeah.

W'y, dey's somep'n' downright
holy in de way our faces
shine,

When Angelina Johnson comes
a-swingin' down de line.

Angelina steps so gentle, Angelina
bows so low,

An' she lif' huh sku't so dainty dat
huh shoetop skacely show:

An' dem teef o' huh'n a-shinin', ez
she tek you by de han'—

Go 'way, people, d' ain't anothah
sich a lady in de lan'!

When she's movin' thoo de figgers
er a-dancin' by huhse'f,

Folks jes' stan' stock-still a-sta'-
in', an' dey mos' nigh hol's
dey bref;

An' de young mens, dey's a-sayin',
"I's gwine mek dat damsel
mine,"

When Angelina Johnson comes
a-swingin' down de line.

FOOLIN' WID DE SEASONS

SEEMS lak folks is mighty curus

In de way dey t'inks an' ac's.

Dey jes' spen's dey days a-mixin'

Up de t'ings in almanacs.

Now, I min' my nex' do' neigh-
bour,—

He's a mighty likely man,

But he nevah t'inks o' nuffin

'Ceptin' jes' to plot an' plan.

All de wintah he was plannin'

How he'd gettah sassafra

Jes' ez soon ez evah Springtime

Put some greenness in de grass.

An' he 'lowed a little soonah

He could stan' a coolah breeze

So's to mek a little money

F'om de sugah-watah trees.

In de summah, he'd be waihin'

Out de linin' of his soul,

Try 'n' ca'ci'late an' fashion

How he'd git his wintah coal;

An' I b'lieve he got his judgement

Jes' so tuckahed out an' thinned

Dat he t'ought a robin's whistle

Was de whistle of de wind.

Why won't folks gin up dey plan-
nin',

An' jes' be content to know

Dat dey's gittin' all dat's fu' dem

In de days dat come an' go?

Why won't folks quit movin' for-
rard?

Ain't hit bettah jes' to stan'

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

An' be satisfied wid livin'
In de season dat 's at han'?

Hit 's enough fu' me to listen
W'en de birds is singin' 'roun',
'Dout a-guessin' whut 'll happen
W'en de snow is on de groun'.
In de Springtime an' de summah,
I lays sorrer on de she'f;
An' I knows ol' Mistah Wintah
Gwine to hustle fu' hisse'f.

We been put hyeah fu' a pu'pose,
But de questun dat has riz
An' made lots o' people diffiah
Is jes' whut dat pu'pose is.
Now, accordin' to my reas'nin',
Hyeah 's de p'int whaih I 's
arriv,
Sence de Lawd put life into us,
We was put hyeah fu' to live!

MY SORT O' MAN

I DON'T believe in 'ristercrats
An' never did, you see;
The plain ol' homelike sorter folks
Is good enough fur me.
O' course, I don't desire a man
To be too tarnal rough,
But then, I think all folks should
know
When they air nice enough.

Now there is folks in this here
world,
From peasant up to king,

Who want to be so awful nice
They overdo the thing.
That 's jest the thing that makes
me sick,
An' quicker 'n a wink
I set it down that them same
folks
Ain't half so good 's you
think.

I like to see a man dress nice,
In clothes becomin' too;
I like to see a woman fix
As women orter to do;
An' boys an' gals I like to see
Look fresh an' young an'
spry,—
We all must have our vanity
An' pride before we die.

But I jedge no man by his
clothes,—
Nor gentleman nor tramp;
The man that wears the finest suit
May be the biggest scamp,
An' he whose limbs air clad in rags
That make a mournful sight,
In life's great battle may have
proved
A hero in the fight.

I don't believe in 'ristercrats;
I like the honest tan
That lies upon the healthful cheek
An' speaks the honest man;
I like to grasp the brawny hand
That labor's lips have kissed,

PAUL. LAURENCE DUNBAR

For he who has not labored here
Life's greatest pride has
missed:

The pride to feel that yore own
strength

Has cleaved fur you the way
To heights to which you were not
born,

But struggled day by day.
What though the thousands sneer
an' scoff,

An' scorn yore humble birth?
Kings are but puppets; you are
king
By right o' royal worth.

The man who simply sits an' waits
Fur good to come along,
Ain't worth the breath that one
would take

To tell him he is wrong.
Fur good ain't flowin' round this
world

Fur every fool to sup;
You've got to put yore see-ers on,
An' go an' hunt it up.

Good goes with honesty, I say,
To honour an' to bless;
To rich an' poor alike it brings
A wealth o' happiness.

The 'ristercrats ain't got it all,
Fur much to their su'prise,
That's one of earth's most blessed
things
They can't monopolize.

POSSUM

EF dey's any'ting dat riles me
An' jes' gits me out o' hitch,
Twel I want to tek my coat off,
So 's to r'ar an' t'ar an' pitch,
Hit's to see some ign'ant white
man

'Mittin' dat owdacious sin —
W'en he want to cook a possum
Tekin' off de possum's skin.

W'y dey ain't no use in talkin',
Hit jes' hu'ts me to de hea't
Fu' to see dem foolish people
Th'owin' 'way de fines' pa't.

W'y, dat skin is jes' ez tendah
An' ez juicy ez kin be;
I knows all erbout de critter —
Hide an' haih — don't talk to
me!

Possum skin is jes lak shoat skin;
Jes' you swinge an' scrope it
down,

Tek a good sha'p knife an' sco' it,
Den you bake it good an' brown.
Huh-uh! honey, you's so happy
Dat yo' thoughts is 'mos' a sin
When you's settin' dah a-chawin'
On dat possum's cracklin' skin.

White folks t'ink dey know 'bout
eatin',

An' I reckon dat dey do
Sometimes git a little idee
Of a middlin' dish er two;

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

But dey ain't a t'ing dey knows of
Dat I reckon cain't be beat
W'en we set down at de table
To a unskun possum's meat!

ON THE ROAD

I's boun' to see my gal to-night —
Oh, lone de way, my dearie!
De moon ain't out, de stars ain't
bright —

Oh, lone de way, my dearie!
Dis hoss o' mine is pow'ful slow,
But when I does git to yo' do'
Yo' kiss 'll pay me back, an' mo',
Dough lone de way, my dearie.

De night is skeery-lak an' still —
Oh, lone de way, my dearie!
'Cept fu' dat mou'nful whippo'-
will —

Oh, lone de way, my dearie!
De way so long wif dis slow pace,
'T'u'd seem to me lak savin' grace
Ef you was on a nearer place,
Fu' lone de way, my dearie.

I hyeah de hootin' of de owl —
Oh, lone de way, my dearie!
I wish dat watch-dog would n't
howl —

Oh, lone de way, my dearie!
An' evaht'ing, bofe right an' lef',
Seem p'int'ly lak hit put itse'f
In shape to skeer me half to def —
Oh, lone de way, my dearie!

I whistles so 's I won't be feared —
Oh lone de way, my dearie!
But anyhow I's kin' o' skeered,
Fu' lone de way, my dearie.
De sky been lookin' mighty glum,
But you kin mek hit lighten some,
Ef you 'll jes' say you 's glad I
come,
Dough lone de way, my dearie.

A DEATH SONG

LAY me down beneaf de willers in
de grass,
Whah de branch 'll go a-singin' as
it pass.
An' w'en I's a-layin' low,
I kin hyeah it as it go
Singin', "Sleep, my honey, tek yo'
res' at las'."

Lay me nigh to whah hit meks a
little pool,
An' de watah stan's so quiet lak
an' cool,
Whah de little birds in spring,
Ust to come an' drink an' sing,
An' de chillen waded on dey way
to school.

Let me settle w'en my shouldahs
draps dey load
Nigh enough to hyeah de noises in
de road;
Fu' I t'ink de las' long res'
Gwine to soothe my sperrit bes'
Ef I's layin' 'mong de t'ings I's
allus knowed.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

A BACK-LOG SONG

DE axes has been ringin' in de
woods de blessid day,

An' de chips has been a-fallin'
fa' an' thick;

Dey has cut de bigges' hick'ry dat
de mules kin tote away,

An' dey's laid hit down and
soaked it in de crik.

Den dey tuk hit to de big house an'
dey piled de wood erroun'

In de fiah-place f'om ash-flo' to
de flue,

While ol' Ezry sta'ts de hymn dat
evah yeah has got to soun'

When de back-log fus' com-
mence a-bu'nin' thoo.

Ol' Mastah is a-smilin' on de
da'kies f'om de hall,

Ol' Mistus is a-stannin' in de do',
An' de young folks, males an'
misses, is a-tryin', one an'
all,

Fu' to mek' us feel hit's Chris-
mus time fu' sho'.

An' ouah hea'ts are full of pleasure,
fu' we know de time is
ouahs

Fu' to dance er do jes' whut we
wants to do.

An' dey ain't no ovahseer an' no
othah kind o' powahs

Dat kin stop us while dat log
is bu'nin' thoo.

Dey's a-wokin' in de qua'tahs a-
preparin' fu' de feas',
So de little pigs is feelin' kind o'
shy.

De chickens ain't so trus'ful ez
dey was, to say de leas',
An' de wise ol' hens is roostin'
mighty high.

You could n't git a gobblah fu' to
look you in de face —

I ain't sayin' whut de tu'ky
'spects is true;

But hit's mighty dange'ous trav'-
lin' fu' de critters on' de
place

F'om de time dat log commence a
bu'nin' thoo.

Some one's tunin' up his fiddle
dah, I hyeah a banjo's ring,
An', bless me, dat's de tootin' of
a ho'n!

Now dey'll evah one be runnin'
dat has got a foot to fling,
An' dey'll dance an' frolic on
f'om now 'twell mo'n.

Plunk de banjo, scrap de fiddle,
blow dat ho'n yo' level bes',
Keep yo' min' erpon de chune
an' step it true.

Oh, dey ain't no time fu' stoppin'
an' dey ain't no time fu'
res',

Fu' hit's Chrismus an' de back-
log's bu'nin' thoo!

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

LULLABY

BEDTIME 's come fu' little boys.
Po' little lamb.
Too tiahed out to make a noise,
Po' little lamb.
You gwine t' have to-morrer sho'?
Yes, you tole me dat befo',
Don't you fool me, chile, no mo',
Po' little lamb.

You been bad de livelong day,
Po' little lamb.
Th'owin' stones an' runnin' 'way,
Po' little lamb.
My, but you 's a-runnin' wil',
Look jes' lak some po' folks chile;
Mam' gwine whup you atter while,
Po' little lamb.

Come hyeah! you mos' tiahed to
def,
Po' little lamb.
Played yo'se'f clean out o' bref,
Po' little lamb.
See dem han's now — sich a sight!
Would you evah b'lieve dey's
white?
Stan' still twell I wash 'em right,
Po' little lamb.

Jes' cain't hol' yo' haid up straight,
Po' little lamb.
Had n't oughter played so late,
Po' little lamb.
Mammy do' know whut she 'd do,
Ef de chillun's all lak you;
You 's a caution now fu' true,
Po' little lamb.

Lay yo' haid down in my lap,
Po' little lamb.
Y' ought to have a right good slap,
Po' little lamb.
You been runnin' roun' a heap.
Shet dem eyes an' don't you peep,
Dah now, dah now, go to sleep,
Po' little lamb.

THE PHOTOGRAPH

SEE dis pictyah in my han'?
Dat 's my gal;
Ain't she purty? goodness lan'!
Huh name Sal.
Dat 's de very way she be —
Kin' o' tickles me to see
Huh a-smilin' back at me.
She sont me dis photygraph
Jes' las' week;
An' aldough hit made me laugh —
My black cheek
Felt somethin' a-runnin' queer;
Bless yo' soul, it was a tear
Jes' f'om wishin' she was here.

Often when I 's all alone
Layin' here,
I git t'inkin' 'bout my own
Sallie dear;
How she say dat I 's huh beau,
An' hit tickles me to know
Dat de gal do love me so.
Some bright day I 's goin' back,
Fo' de la!

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

An' ez sho' 's my face is black,
Ax huh pa
Fu' de blessed little miss
Who 's a-smilin' out o dis
Pictyah, lak she wan'ed a kiss!

Second hand to boot,
I 's a-tryin' to spite you!
Full of jealousy!
Look hyeah, man, I 'll fight
you,
Don't you fool wid me!

JEALOUS

HYEAH come Cæsar Higgins,
Don't he think he 's fine?
Look at dem new riggin's
Ain't he tryin' to shine?
Got a standin' collar
An' a stove-pipe hat,
I 'll jes' bet a dollar
Some one gin him dat.

Don't one o' you mention,
Nothin' 'bout his cloes,
Don't pay no attention,
Er let on you knows
Dat he 's got 'em on him,
Why, 't 'll mek him sick,
Jes go on an' sco'n him,
My, ain't dis a trick!

Look hyeah, whut 's he doin'
Lookin' t' othah way?
Dat ere move 's a new one,
Some one call him, "Say!"
Can't you see no pusson —
Puttin' on you' airs,
Sakes alive, you 's wuss'n
Dese hyeah millionaires.

Need n't git so flighty,
Case you got dat suit.
Dem cloes ain't so mighty,—

PARTED

DE breeze is blowin' 'cross de bay.
My lady, my lady;
De ship hit teks me far away,
My lady, my lady;
Ole Mas' done sol' me down de
stream;
Dey tell me 't ain't so bad 's hit
seem,
My lady, my lady.

O' co'se I knows dat you 'll be
true,
My lady, my lady;
But den I do' know whut to do,
My lady, my lady;
I knowed some day we 'd have to
pa't,
But den hit put' nigh breaks my
hea't,
My lady, my lady.

De day is long, de night is black,
My lady, my lady;
I know you 'll wait twell I come
back,
My lady, my lady;
I 'll stan' de ship, I 'll stan' de
chain,

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

But I'll come back, my darlin'
Jane,
My lady, my lady.

Jes' wait, jes' b'lieve in whut I
say,
My lady, my lady;
D' ain't nothin' dat kin keep me
'way,

My lady, my lady;
A man's a man, an' love is love;
God knows ouah hea'ts, my little
dove;
He'll he'p us f'om his th'one
above,
My lady, my lady.

TEMPTATION

I DONE got 'uligion, honey, an' I's
happy ez a king;
Evahthing I see erbout me's jes'
lak sunshine in de spring;
An' it seems lak I do' want to do
anothah blessid thing
But jes' run an' tell de neighbours,
an' to shout an' pray an'
sing.

I done shuk my fis' at Satan, an'
I's gin de worl' my back;
I do' want no hendrin' causes now
a-both'rin' in my track;
Fu' I's on my way to glory, an' I
feels too sho' to miss.
W'y, dey ain't no use in sinnin'
when 'uligion's sweet ez dis.

Talk erbout a man backslidin' w'en
he's on de gospel way;
No, suh, I done beat de debbil, an'
Temptation's los' de day.

Gwine to keep my eyes right
straight up, gwine to shet my
eahs, an' see
Whut ole projick Mistah Satan's
gwine to try to wuk on me.

Listen, whut dat soun' I hyeah
dah? 'tain't no one commence
to sing;

It's a fiddle; git erway dah! don'
you · hyeah dat blessid
thing?

W'y, dat's sweet ez drippin' honey,
'cause, you knows, I draws de
bow,

An' when music's sho' 'nough
music, I's de one dat's sho'
to know.

W'y, I's done de double shuffle,
twell a body could n't res',

Jes' a-hyehin' Sam de fiddlah play
dat chune his level bes';

I could cut a mighty caper, I could
gin a mighty fling

Jes' right now, I's mo' dan suttain
I could cut de pigeon wing.

Look hyeah, whut's dis I's been
sayin'? whut on urf's tuk
holt o' me?

Dat ole music come nigh runnin'
my 'uligion up a tree!

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Cleah out wif dat dah ole fiddle,
don' you try dat trick agin;
Did n't think I could be tempted,
but you lak to made me sin!

POSSUM TROT

I 'VE journeyed 'roun' consid'able,
a-seein' men an' things,
An' I've learned a little of the
sense that meetin' people
brings;
But in spite of all my travellin',
an' of all I think I know,
I've got one notion in my head,
that I can't git to go;
An' it is that the folks I meet in
any other spot
Ain't half so good as them I
knowed back home in Possum
Trot.

I know you've never heerd the
name, it ain't a famous
place,
An' I reckon ef you'd search the
map you could n't find a trace
Of any sich locality as this I've
named to you;
But never mind, I know the place,
an' I love it dearly too.
It don't make no pretensions to
bein' great or fine,
The circuses don't come that way,
they ain't no railroad line.
It ain't no great big city, where
the schemers plan an' plot,

But jest a little settlement, this
place called Possum Trot.

But don't you think the folks that
lived in that outlandish place
Were ignorant of all the things
that go for sense or grace.

Why, there was Hannah Dyer, you
may search this teemin' earth
An' never find a sweeter girl, er
one o' greater worth;

An' Uncle Abner Williams, a-
leanin' on his staff,

It seems like I kin hear him talk,
an' hear his hearty laugh.

His heart was big an' cheery as a
sunny acre lot,

Why, that's the kind o' folks we
had down there at Possum
Trot.

Good times? Well, now, to suit
my taste,—an' I'm some hard
to suit,—

There ain't been no sich pleasure
sence, an' won't be none to
boot,

With huskin' bees in Harvest time,
an' dances later on,

An' singin' school, an' taffy pulls,
an' fun from night till
dawn.

Revivals come in winter time, bap-
tizin's in the spring,

You'd ought to seen those people
shout, an' heerd 'em pray an'
sing;

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

You'd ought to 've heard ole Par-
son Brown a-throwin' gospel
shot

Among the saints an' sinners in
the days of Possum Trot.

We live up in the city now, my
wife was bound to come;

I hear aroun' me day by day the
endless stir an' hum.

I reckon that it done me good, an'
yet it done me harm,

That oil was found so plentiful
down there on my ole farm.

We've got a new-styled preacher,
our church is new-styled too,
An' I've come down from what I
knowed to rent a cushioned
pew.

But often when I'm settin' there,
it's foolish, like as not,

To think of them ol' benches in
the church at Possum Trot.

I know that I'm ungrateful, an'
sich thoughts must be a sin,

But I find myself a wishin' that
the times was back agin.

With the huskin's an' the frolics,
an' the joys I used to know,
When I lived at the settlement, a
dozen years ago.

I don't feel this way often, I'm
scarcely ever glum,

For life has taught me how to take
her chances as they come.

But now an' then my mind goes
back to that ol' buryin' plot,

That holds the dust of some I
loved, down there at Possum
Trot.

DELY

Jes' lak toddy wahms you thoo'

Sets yo' haid a reelin',

Meks you ovah good and new,

Dat's de way I's feelin'.

Seems to me hit's summah time,

Dough hit's wintah reely,

I's a feelin' jes' dat prime —

An' huh name is Dely.

Dis hyeah love's a cu'rus thing,

Changes 'roun' de season,

Meks you sad or meks you sing,

'Dout no urfly reason.

Sometimes I go mopin' 'roun',

Den agin I's leapin';

Sperits allus up an' down

Even when I's sleepin'.

Fu' de dreams comes to me den,

An' dey keeps me pitchin',

Lak de apple dumplin's w'en

Bilin' in de kitchen.

Some one sot to do me hahm,

Tryin' to ovahcome me,

Ketchin' Dely by de ahm

So's to tek huh f'om me.

Mon, you bettah b'lieve I fights

(Dough hit's on'y seemin');

I's a hittin' fu' my rights

Even w'en I's dreamin'.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

But I'd let you have 'em all,
Give 'em to you freely,
Good an' bad ones, great an' small,
So's you leave me Dely.

Dely got dem meltin' eyes,
Big an' black an' tendah.
Dely jes' a lady-size,
Delikit an' slendah.

Dely brown ez brown kin be
An' huh haih is curly;
Oh, she look so sweet to me,—
Bless de precious girlie!

Dely brown ez brown kin be,
She ain' no mullatter;
She pure cullud,—don' you see
Dat's jes' whut's de mattah?
Dat's de why I love huh so,
D' ain't no mix about huh,
Soon's you see huh face you know
D' ain't no chanst to doubt huh.

Folks dey go to chu'ch an' pray
So's to git a blessin'.
Oomph, dey bettah come my way,
Dey could lu'n a lesson.
Sabbaf day I don' go fu',
Jes' to see my pigeon;
I jes' sets an' looks at huh,
Dat's enuff 'uligion.

BREAKING THE CHARM

CAUGHT Susanner whistlin'; well,
It's most nigh too good to tell.
'Twould 'a' b'en too good to see
Ef it had n't b'en fur me,

Comin' up so soft an' sly
That she didn' hear me nigh.
I was pokin' 'round that day,
An' ez I come down the way,
First her whistle strikes my ears,—
Then her gingham dress appears;
So with soft step up I slips.
Oh, them dewy, rosy lips!
Ripe ez cherries, red an' round,
Puckered up to make the sound.
She was lookin' in the spring,
Whistlin' to beat anything,—
"Kitty Dale" er "In the Sweet."

I was jest so mortal beat
That I can't quite ricolock
What the toon was, but I 'speck
'T was some hymn er other, fur
Hymny things is jest like her.
Well she went on fur awhile
With her face all in a smile,
An' I never moved, but stood
Still'er 'n a piece o' wood —
Would n't wink ner would n't stir,
But a-gazin' right at her,
Tell she turns an' sees me — my!
Thought at first she'd try to fly.
But she blushed an' stood her
ground.

Then, a-slyly lookin' round,
She says: "Did you hear me,
Ben?"

"Whistlin' woman, crowin' hen,"
Says I, lookin' awful stern.
Then the red commenced to burn
In them cheeks o' hern. Why, la!
Reddest red you ever saw —
Pineys wa'n't a circumstance.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

You 'd 'a' noticed in a glance
She was pow'rful shamed an'
skeart;

But she looked so sweet an' peart,
That a idee struck my head;

So I up an' slowly said:

"Woman whistlin' brings shore
harm,

Jest one thing 'll break the charm."

"And what's that?" "Oh,
my!" says I,

"I don't like to tell you."

"Why?"

Says Susanner. "Well, you see

It would kinder fall on me."

Course I knowed that she'd in-
sist,—

So I says: "You must be kissed
By the man that heard you whistle;
Everybody says that this 'll
Break the charm and set you free
From the threat'nin' penalty."

She was blushin' fit to kill,

But she answered, kinder still:

"I don't want to have no harm,

Please come, Ben, an' break the
charm."

Did I break that charm?—oh,
well,

There's some things I must n't
tell.

I remember, afterwhile,

Her a-sayin' with a smile:

"Oh, you quit,—you sassy dunce,

You jest caught me whistlin' *once*."

Ev'ry sence that when I hear

Some one whistlin' kinder clear,

I most break my neck to see

Ef it's Susy; but, dear me,

I jest find I've b'en to chase

Some blamed boy about the place.

Dad's b'en noticin' my way,

An' last night I heerd him say:

"We must send fur Dr. Glenn,
Mother; somethin's wrong with
Ben!"

HUNTING SONG

TEK a cool night, good an'
cleah,

Skiff o' snow upon de groun';

Jes' 'bout fall-time o' de yeah

W'en de leaves is dry an'
brown;

Tek a dog an' tek a axe,

Tek a lantu'n in yo' han',

Step light whah de switches
cracks,

Fu' dey's huntin' in de lan'.
Down thoo de valleys an' ovah de
hills,

Into de woods whah de 'simmon-
tree grows,

Wakin' an' skeerin' de po' whip-
po'wills,

Huntin' fu' coon an' fu' 'possum
we goes.

Blow dat ho'n dah loud an'
strong,

Call de dogs an' da'kies neah;

Mek its music cleah an' long,

So de folks at home kin hyeah.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Blow it twell de hills an' trees
Sen's de echoes tumblin' back;
Blow it twell de back'ard breeze
Tells de folks we's on de
track.
Coons is 'a-ramblin' an' 'possums
is out;
Look at dat dog; you could set
on his tail!
Watch him now — steady,—min'
— what you 's about,
Bless me, dat animal 's got on
de trail!
Listen to him ba'kin now!
Dat means bus'ness, sho 's you
bo'n;
Ef he 's struck de scent I 'low
Dat ere 'possum 's sholy gone.
Knowed dat dog fu' fo'teen
yeahs,
An' I nevah seed him fail
W'en he sot dem flappin' eahs
An' went off upon a trail.
Run, Mistah 'Possum, an' run,
Mistah Coon,
No place is safe fu' yo' ramblin'
to-night;
Mas' gin' de lantu'n an' God gin
de moon,
An' a long hunt gins a good ap-
petite.
Look hyeah, folks, you hyeah
dat change?
Dat ba'k is sha'per dan de res'.
Dat ere soun' ain't nothin'
strange,—

Dat dog's talked his level
bes'.
Somep'n' 's treed, I know de
soun'.
Dah now,— wha'd I tell
you? see!
Dat ere dog done run him
down;
Come hyeah, he'p cut down
dis tree.
Ah, Mistah 'Possum, we got you
at las'—
Need n't play daid, laying dah
on de groun';
Fros' an' de 'simmons has made
you grow fas',—
Won't he be fine when he's
roasted up brown!

A LETTER

DEAR MISS LUCY: I been t'inkin'
dat I 'd write you long fo' dis,
But dis writin' 's mighty tejous, an'
you know jes' how it is.
But I 's got a little lesure, so I teks
my pen in han'
Fu' to let you know my feelin's
since I retched dis furrin' lan'.
I 's right well, I 's glad to tell you
(dough dis climate ain't to
blame),
An' I hopes w'en dese lines reach
you, dat dey 'll fin' yo' se'f de
same.
Cose I 'se feelin kin' o' homesick
— dat 's ez nachul ez kin be,

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

W'en a feller's mo'n th'ee thou-
sand miles across dat awful
sea.

(Don't you let nobidy fool you
'bout de ocean bein' gran';

If you want to see de billers, you
jes' view dem f'om de lan'.)

'Bout de people? We been t'inkin'
dat all white folks was alak;

But dese Englishmen is diffunt,
an' dey's curus fu' a fac'.

Fust, dey's heavier an' redder in
dey make-up an' dey looks,

An' dey don't put salt nor pepper
in a blessed t'ing dey cooks!

W'en dey gin you good ol' tu'nips,
ca'ots, pa'snips, beets, an'
sich,

Ef dey ain't some one to tell you,
you cain't 'stinguish which is
which.

W'en I t'ought I's eatin' chicken
— you may b'lieve dis hyeah's
a lie —

But de waiter beat me down dat I
was eatin' rabbit pie.

An' dey'd t'ink dat you was crazy
— jes' a reg'lar ravin' loon,

Ef you'd speak erbout a 'possum
or a piece o' good ol' coon.

O, hit's mighty nice, dis trav'lin',
an' I's kin' o' glad I come.

But, I reckon, now I's willin' fu'
to tek my way back home.

I done see de Crystal Palace, an'
I's hyeahd dey string-band
play,

But I has n't seen no banjos layin'
nowhahs roun' dis way.

Jes' gin ol' Jim Bowles a banjo,
an' he'd not go very fu',

'Fo' he'd outplayed all dese fid-
dlers, wif dey flourish and
dey stir.

Evahbiddy dat I's met wif has
been monst'ous kin an' good;

But I t'ink I'd lak it better to be
down in Jones's wood,

Where we ust to have sich frolics,
Lucy, you an' me an' Nelse,

Dough my appetite 'ud call me, ef
dey was n't nuffin else.

I'd jes' lak to have some sweet-
pertaters roasted in de skin;

I's a-longin' fu' my chittlin's an'
my mustard greens ergin;

I's a-wishin' fu' some buttermilk,
an' co'n braid, good an'
brown,

An' a drap o' good ol' bourbon fu'
to wash my feelin's down!

An' I's comin' back to see you jes'
as ehly as I kin,

So you better not go spa'kin' wif
dat wuffless scoun'el Quin!

Well, I reckon, I mus' close now;
write ez soon's dis reaches
you;

Gi' my love to Sister Mandy an'
to Uncle Isham, too.

Tell de folks I sen' 'em howdy;
gin a kiss to pap an' mam;

Closin' I is, deah Miss Lucy,
Still Yo' Own True-Lovin' SAM.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

P. S. Ef you cain't mek out dis
letter, lay it by erpon de she'f,
An' when I git home, I'll read
it, darlin', to you my own se'f.

CHRISMUS IS A-COMIN'

BONES a-gittin' achy,
Back a-feelin' col',
Han's a-growin' shaky,
Jes' lak I was ol'.
Fros' erpon de meddah
Lookin' mighty white;
Snowdraps lak a feddah
Slippin' down at night.
Jes' keep t'ings a-hummin'
Spite o' fros' an' showahs,
Chrismus is a-comin'
An' all de week is ouahs.

Little mas' a-axin',
"Who is Santy Claus?"
Meks it kin' o' taxin'
Not to brek de laws.
Chillun's pow'ful tryin'
To a pusson's grace
W'en dey go a pryin'
Right on th'oo you' face
Down ermong yo' feelin's;
Jes' 'pears lak dat you
Got to change you' dealin's
So's to tell 'em true.

An' my pickaninny —
Dreamin' in his sleep!
Come hyeah, Mammy Jinny,
Come an' tek a peep.

Ol' Mas' Bob an' Missis
In dey house up daih
Got no chile lak dis is,
D' ain't none anywhaih.
Sleep, my little lammy,
Sleep, you little limb,
He do' know whut mammy
Done saved up fu' him.

Dey'll be banjo pickin',
Dancin' all night thoo.
Dey'll be lots o' chicken,
Plenty tukky, too.
Drams to wet yo' whistles
So's to drive out chills.
Whut I keer fu' drizzles
Fallin' on de hills?
Jes' keep t'ings a-hummin'
Spite o' col' an' showahs,
Chrismus day's a-comin',
An' all de week is ouahs

A CABIN TALE

THE YOUNG MASTER ASKS FOR A
STORY

WHUT you say, dah? huh, uh!
chile,
You's enough to dribe me wile.
Want a sto'y; jes' hyeah dat!
Whah'll I git a sto'y at?
Di'n' I tell you th'ee las' night?
Go 'way, honey, you ain't right.
I got somep'n' else to do,
'Cides jes' tellin' tales to you.
Tell you jes' one? Lem me see
Whut dat one's a-gwine to be.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

When you 's ole, yo membry fails;
Seems lak I do' know no tales.
Well, set down dah in dat cheer,
Keep still ef you wants to hyeah.
Tek dat chin up off yo' han's,
Set up nice now. Goodness lan's!
Hol' yo'se'f up lak yo' pa.

Bet nobidy evah saw
Him scrunched down lak you was
den —
High-tone boys meks high-tone
men.

Once dey was a ole black bah,
Used to live 'roun' hyeah some-
whah

In a cave. He was so big
He could ca'y off a pig
Lak you picks a chicken up,
Er yo' leetles' bit o' pup.
An' he had two gread big eyes,
Jes' erbout a saucer's size.
Why, dey looked lak balls o' fiah
Jumpin' 'roun' erpon a wiah
W'en dat bah was mad; an' laws!
But you ought to seen his paws!
Did I see 'em? How you 'spec
I's a-gwine to ricollec'
Dis hyeah ya'n I's try'n' to spin
Ef you keeps on puttin' in?
You keep still an' don't you cheep
Less I'll sen' you off to sleep.
Dis hyeah bah'd go trompin'
'roun'
Eatin' evahthing he foun';
No one could n't have a fa'm
But dat bah 'u'd do' em ha'm;

And dey could n't ketch de scamp.
Anywhah he wan'ed to tramp.
Dah de scoun'el 'd mek his track,
Do his du't an' come on back.
He was sich a sly ole limb,
Traps was jes' lak fun to him.

Now, down neah whah Mistah
Bah

Lived, dey was a weasel dah;
But dey was n't fren's a-tall
Case de weasel was so small.
An' de bah 'u'd, jes' fu' sass,
Tu'n his nose up w'en he'd pass.
Weasels's small o' cose, but my!
Dem air animiles is sly.
So dis hyeah one says, says he,
"I'll jes' fix dat bah, you see."
So he fixes up his plan
An' hunts up de fa'merman.
When de fa'mer see him come,
He 'mence lookin' mighty glum,
An' he ketches up a stick;
But de weasel speak up quick:
"Hol' on, Mistah Fa'mer man,
I wan' 'splain a little plan.
Ef you waits, I'll tell you whah
An' jes' how to ketch ol' Bah.
But I tell yow now you mus'
Gin me one fat chicken fus'."
Den de man he scratch his haid,
Las' he say, "I'll mek de trade."
So de weasel et his hen,
Smacked his mouf and says,
"Well, den,
Set yo' trap an' bait ternight,
An' I'll ketch de bah all right."

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Den he ups an' goes to see
Mistah Bah, an' says, says he:
"Well, fren' Bah, we *ain't* been
fren's,

But ternight ha'd feelin' 'en's.
Ef you ain't too proud to steal,
We kin git a splendid meal.
Cose I would n't come to you,
But it mus' be done by two;
Hit's a trap, but we kin beat
All dey tricks an' git de meat."
"Cose I's wif you," says de bah,
"Come on, weasel, show me
whah."

Well, dey trots erlong ontwell
Dat air meat began to smell
In de trap. Den weasel say:
"Now you put yo' paw dis way
While I hol' de spring back so,
Den you grab de meat an' go."
Well, de bah he had to grin
Ez he put his big paw in,
Den he juked up, but — kerbing!
Weasel done let go de spring.
"Dah now," says de weasel, "dah,
I done cotched you, Mistah Bah!"
O, dat bah did sno't and spout,
Try'n' his bestes' to git out,
But de weasel say, "Goo'-bye!
Weasel small, but weasel sly."
Den he tu'ned his back an' run
Tol' de fa'mer whut he done.
So de fa'mer come down dah,
Wif a axe and killed de bah.

Dah now, ain't dat sto'y fine?
Run erlong now, nevah min'.

Want some mo', you rascal, you?
No, suh! no, suh! dat 'll do.

AT CANDLE-LIGHTIN' TIME

WHEN I come in f'om de co'n-fiel'
aftah wo'kin' ha'd all day,
It's amazin' nice to fin' my sup-
pah all erpon de way;
An' it's nice to smell de coffee
bubblin' ovah in de pot,
An' it's fine to see de meat a-
sizzlin' teasin'-lak an' hot.

But when suppah-time is ovah, an'
de t'ings is cleahed away;
Den de happy hours dat foller are
de sweetes' of de day.

When my co'ncob pipe is sta'ted,
an' de smoke is drawin'
prime,

My ole 'ooman says, "I reckon,
Ike, it's candle-lightin' time."

Den de chillun snuggle up to me,
an' all commence to call,

"Oh, say, daddy, now it's time
to mek de shadders on de
wall."

So I puts my han's togethah —
evah daddy knows de way, —
An' de chillun snuggle closer roun'
ez I begin to say: —

"Fus' thing, hyeah come Mistah
Rabbit; don' you see him wo'k
his eahs?"

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

Huh, uh! dis mus' be a donkey,—
 look, how innercent he 'pears!
 Dah's de ole black swan a-swim-
 min'—ain't she got a' awful
 neck?
 Who's dis feller dat's a-comin'?
 Why, dat's ole dog Tray, I
 'spec'!"

Dat's de way I run on, tryin' fu'
 to please 'em all I can;
 Den I hollahs, "Now be keerful
 —dis hyeah las' 's de buga-
 man!"
 An' dey runs an' hides dey faces;
 dey ain't skeered — dey 's let-
 tin' on:
 But de play ain't raaly ovah twell
 dat buga-man is gone.

So I jes' teks up my banjo, an' I
 plays a little chune,
 An' you see dem haid come peepin'
 out to listen mighty soon.
 Den my wife says, "Sich a pappy
 fu' to give you sich a fright!
 Jes, you go to baid, an' leave him:
 say yo' prayers an' say good-
 night."

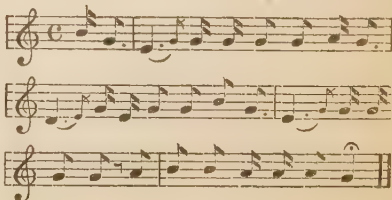
WHISTLING SAM

I HAS hyeahd o' people dancin' an'
 I's hyeahd o' people singin'.
 An' I's been 'roun' lots of othahs
 dat could keep de banjo
 ringin';

But of all de whistlin' da'kies dat
 have lived an' died since Ham,
 De whistlin'est I evah seed was
 ol' Ike Bates's Sam.
 In de kitchen er de stable, in de
 fiel' er mowin' hay,
 You could hyeah dat boy a-whis-
 tlin' pu'ty nigh a mile er-
 way,—
 Puck'rin' up his ugly features
 'twell you could n't see his
 eyes,
 Den you'd hyeah a soun' lak dis
 un f'om dat awful puckah
 rise:



When dey had revival meetin' an'
 de Lawd's good grace was
 flowin'
 On de groun' dat needed wat'rin'
 whaih de seeds of good was
 growin',
 While de othahs was a-singin' an'
 a-shoutin' right an' lef',
 You could hyeah dat boy a-whis-
 tlin' kin' o' sof' beneaf his
 bref:



PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

At de call fu' colo'ed soldiers,
 Sam enlisted 'mong de res'
 Wid de blue o' Gawd's great ahmy
 wropped about his swellin'
 breas',

An' he laffed an' whistled loudah
 in his youfful joy an' glee

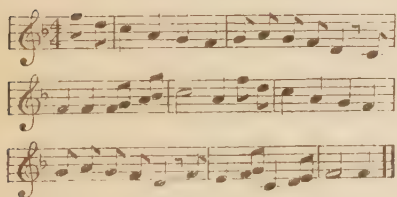
Dat de govament would let him
 he'p to mek his people free.

Daih was lots o' ties to bin' him,
 pappy, mammy, an' his
 Dinah,—

Dinah, min' you, was his sweet-
 hea't, an' dey was n't nary
 finah;

But he lef' 'em all, I tell you, lak
 a king he ma'ched away,

Try'n' his level bes' to whistle,
 happy, solemn, choky, gay:



To de front he went an' bravely
 fought de foe an' kep' his
 sperrit,

An' his comerds said his whistle
 made 'em strong when dey
 could hyeah it.

When a saber er a bullet cut some
 frien' o' his'n down,

An' de time 'u'd come to trench
 him an' de boys 'u'd gettah
 'roun',

An' dey could n't sta't a hymn-
 tune, mebbe none o' dem
 'u'd keer,

Sam 'u'd whistle "Sleep in Jesus,"
 an' he knowed de Mastah'd
 hyeah.

In de camp, all sad discouraged,
 he would cheer de hea'ts of
 all,

When above de soun' of labour
 dey could hyeah his whistle
 call:



When de cruel wah was ovah an'
 de boys come ma'chin' back,

Dey was shouts an' cries an'
 blessin's all erlong dey happy
 track,

An' de da'kies all was happy; souls
 an' bodies bofe was freed.

Why, hit seemed lak de Redeemah
 mus' 'a' been on earf indeed.

Dey was gettahed all one evenin'
 jes' befo' de cabin do',

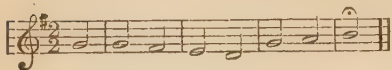
When dey hyeahd somebody
 whistlin' kin' o' sof' an' sweet
 an' low.

Dey could n't see de whistlah, but
 de hymn was cleah and
 ca'm,

An' dey all stood daih a-listenin'
 ontwell Dinah shouted,
 "Sam!"

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

An' dey seed a little da'ky way off
yandah thoo de trees
Wid his face all in a puckah mekin'
jes' sich soun's ez dese:



HOW LUCY BACKSLID

DE times is mighty stirrin' 'mong
de people up ouah way,
Dey 'sputin' an' dey argyin' an'
fussin' night an' day;
An' all dis monst'ous trouble dat
hit meks me tiahed to tell
Is 'bout dat Lucy Jackson dat was
sich a mighty belle.

She was de preachah's favoured,
an' he tol' de chu'ch one
night
Dat she travelled thoo de cloud o'
sin a-bearin' of a light;
But, now, I 'low he t'inkin' dat she
mus' 'a' los' huh lamp,
Case Lucy done backslided an' dey
trouble in de camp.

Huh daddy wants to beat huh, but
huh mammy daihs him to,
Fu' she lookin' at de question f'om
a ooman's pint o' view;
An' she say dat now she would n't
have it diff'ent ef she could;
Dat huh darter only acted jes' lak
any othah would.

Cose you know w'en women argy,
dey is mighty easy led
By dey hea'ts an' don't go foolin'
'bout de reasons of de haid.
So huh mammy laid de law down
(she ain' reckernizin' wrong),
But you got to mek erlowance fu'
de cause dat go along.

Now de cause dat made Miss Lucy
fu' to th'ow huh grace away
I's afeard won't baih no 'spection
w'en hit come to jedgement
day;
Do' de same t'ing been a-wo'kin'
evah sence de worl' began,—
De ooman disobeyin' fu' to 'tice
along a man.

Ef you 'tended de revivals which
we held de wintah pas',
You kin rickolec' dat convuts was
a-comin' thick an' fas';
But dey ain't no use in talkin', dey
was all lef' in de lu'ch
W'en ol' Mis' Jackson's dartah
foun' huh peace an' tuk de
chu'ch.

W'y, she shouted ovah evah inch
of Ebenezah's flo';
Up into de preachah's pulpit an'
f'om dah down to de do';
Den she hugged an' squeezed huh
mammy, an' she hugged an'
kissed huh dad,
An' she struck out at huh sistah,
people said, lak she was mad.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

I has 'tended some revivals dat
was lively in my day,
An' I's seed folks git 'uligion in
mos' evah kin' o' way;
But I tell you, an' you b'lieve me
dat I's speakin' true indeed,
Dat gal tuk huh 'ligion ha'dah dan
de ha'dest yit I's seed.

Well, f'om dat, 't was "Sistah
Jackson, won't you please do
dis er dat?"

She mus' allus sta't de singin'
w'en dey'd pass erroun' de
hat,

An' hit seemed dey was n't nuffin'
in dat chu'ch dat could go by
'Dout sistah Lucy Jackson had a
finger in de pie.

But de sayin' mighty trufeful dat
hit easiah to sail

W'en de sea is ca'm an' gentle dan
to weathah out a gale.

Dat's whut made dis ooman's
trouble; ef de sto'm had kep'
away,

She'd 'a' had enough 'uligion fu'
to lasted out huh day.

Lucy went wid 'Lishy Davis, but
w'en she jined chu'ch, you
know

Dah was lots o' little places dat, of
cose, she could n't go;

An' she had to gin up dancin' an'
huh singin' an' huh play.—

Now hit's nachul dat sich goin's-
on 'u'd drive a man away.

So, w'en Lucy got so solemn, Ike
he sta'ted fu' to go

Wid a gal who was a sinnah an'
could mek a bettah show.

Lucy jes' went on to meetin' lak
she did n't keer a rap,

But my 'sperunce kep' me t'inkin'
dah was somep'n' gwine to
drap.

Fu' a gal won't let 'uligion er no
othah so't o' t'ing

Stop huh w'en she teks a notion
dat she wants a weddin' ring.

You kin p'omise huh de blessin's
of a happy aftah life

(An' hit's nice to be a angel), but
she'd ravah be a wife.

So w'en Chrismus come an' mas-
tah gin a frolic on de lawn,

Did n't 'sprise me not de littlest
seein' Lucy lookin' on.

An' I seed a wa'nin' lightnin' go
a-flashin' f'om huh eye

Jest ez 'Lishy an' his new gal went
a-gallivantin' by.

An' dat Tildy, umph! she giggled,
an' she gin huh dress a flirt

Lak de people she was passin' was
ez common ez de dirt;

An' de minit she was dancin', w'y
dat gal put on mo' aih

Dan a cat a-tek'n' kittens up a
paih o' windin' staihs.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

She could 'fo'd to show huh
sma'tness, fu' she could n't
he'p but know

Dat wid jes' de present dancas
(she was ownah of de flo';

But I t'ink she'd kin' o' cooled
down ef she happened on de
sly

Fu' to noticed dat 'ere lightnin'
dat I seed in Lucy's eye.

An' she would n't been so 'ston-
ished w'en de people gin a
shout,

An' Lucy th'owed huh mantle
back an' come a-glidin' out.

Some ahms was dah to tek huh an'
she fluttahed down de flo'

Lak a feddah f'om a bedtick w'en
de win' commence to blow.

Soon ez Tildy see de trouble, she
jes' tu'n an' toss huh haid,

But seem lak she los' huh sperrit,
all huh darin'ness was daid.

Did n't cut anothah capah nary
time de blessid night;

But de othah one, hit looked lak
could n't git enough delight.

W'en you keeps a colt a-stan'nin'
in de stable all along,

W'en he do git out hit's nachul
he'll be pullin' mighty strong.

Ef you will tie up yo' feelin's,
hyeah's de bes' advice to tek,

Look out fu' an awful loosin' w'en
de string dat hol's 'em brek.

Lucy's mammy groaned to see huh,
an' huh pappy sto'med an' to',

But she kep' right on a-hol'in' to
de centah of de flo'.

So dey went an' ast de pastoh ef he
could n't mek huh quit,

But de tellin' of de sto'y th'owed
de preachah in a fit.

Tildy Taylor chewed huh hank'-
cher twell she'd chewed it in
a hole,—

All de sinnahs was rejoicin' 'cause
a lamb had lef' de fol',

An' de las' I seed o' Lucy, she an'
'Lish was side an' side:

I don't blame de gal fu' dancin',
an' I could n't ef I tried.

Fu' de men dat wants to ma'y
ain't a-growin' 'roun' on
trees,

An' de gal dat wants to git one
sholy has to try to please.

Hit's a ha'd t'ing fu' a ooman fu'
to pray an' jes' set down,

An' to sacafice a husban' so's to
try to gain a crown.

Now, I don' say she was justified
in follerin' huh plan;

But alough she los' huh 'ligion,
yit she sholy got de man.

Latah on, w'en she is suttain dat
de preachah's made 'em fas'

She kin jes' go back to chu'ch an'
ax fu'givenness fu' de pas'!

LYRICS OF LOVE AND LAUGHTER



TWO LITTLE BOOTS

Two little boots all rough an' wo',
Two little boots!

Law, I's kissed 'em times befo',
Dese little boots!

Seems de toes a-peepin' thoo
Dis hyeah hole an' sayin' "Boo!"
Evah time dey looks at you —
Dese little boots.

Membah de time he put 'em on,
Dese little boots;

Riz an' called fu' 'em by dawn,
Dese little boots;

Den he tromped de livelong day,
Laffin' in his happy way,
Evah'ting he had to say,
"My little boots!"

Kickin' de san' de whole day long,
Dem little boots;

Good de cobblah made 'em strong,
Dem little boots!

Rocks was fu' dat baby's use,
I'on had to stan' abuse
W'en you tu'ned dese champeens
loose,
Dese little boots!

Ust to make de ol' cat cry,
Dese little boots;

Den you walked it mighty high,
Proud little boots!

Ahms akimbo, stan'in' wide,

Eyes a-sayin' "Dis is pride!"
Den de manny-baby stride!
You little boots.

Somehow, you don' seem so gay,
Po' little boots,

Sence yo' ownah went erway,
Po' little boots!

Yo' bright tops don' look so red,
Dese brass tips is dull an' dead;
"Goo'-by," whut de baby said;
Deah little boots!

Ain't you kin' o' sad yo'se'f,
You little boots?

Dis is all his mammy's lef',
Two little boots.

Sence huh baby gone an' died.
Heav'n itse'f hit seem to hide
Des a little bit inside
Two little boots.

TO THE ROAD

COOL is the wind, for the summer
is waning,

Who's for the road?
Sun-flecked and soft, where the
dead leaves are raining,

Who's for the road?
Knapsack and alpenstock press
hand and shoulder,
Prick of the brier and roll of the
boulder;

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

This be your lot till the season
grow older;

Who's for the road?

Up and away in the hush of the
morning,

Who's for the road?

Vagabond he, all conventions a-
scorning,

Who's for the road?

Music of warblers so merrily sing-
ing,

Draughts from the rill from the
roadside up-springing,

Nectar of grapes from the vines
lowly swinging,

These on the road.

Now every house is a hut or a
hovel,

Come to the road:

Mankind and moles in the dark
love to grovel,

But to the road.

Throw off the loads that are bend-
ing you double;

Love is for life, only labor is
trouble;

Truce to the town, whose best gift
is a bubble:

Come to the road!

A SPRING WOOING

COME on walkin' wid me, Lucy;
'tain't no time to mope
erroun'

W'en de sunshine's shoutin'
glory in de sky,

An' de little Johnny-Jump-Ups's
jes' a-springin' f'om de
groun',

Den a-lookin' roun' to ax each
othah w'y.

Don' you hyeah dem cows a-
mooiin'? Dat's dey howdy
to de spring;

Ain' dey lookin' most oncom-
mon satisfied?

Hit's enough to mek a body want
to spread dey mouf an'
sing

Jes' to see de critters all so
spa'klin'-eyed.

W'y dat squir'l dat jes' run past
us, ef I did n' know his
tricks,

I could swaih he'd got 'uligion
jes' to-day;

An' dem liza'ds slippin' back an'
fofe ermong de stones an'
sticks

Is a-wigglin' 'cause dey feel so
awful gay.

Oh, I see yo' eyes a-shinin' dough
you try to mek me b'lieve

Dat you ain' so monst'ous happy
'cause you come;

But I tell you dis hyeah weathah
meks it moughty ha'd to
'ceive

Ef a body's soul ain' blin' an'
deef an' dumb.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Robin whistlin' ovah yandah ez he
bul' his little nes';

Whut you reckon dat he sayin'
to his mate?

He's a-sayin' dat he love huh in de
wo'ds she know de bes',

An' she lookin' moughty pleased
at whut he state.

Now, Miss Lucy, dat ah robin
sholy got his sheer o' sense,

An' de hen-bird got huh
mothah-wit fu' true;

So I t'ink ef you'll ixcuse me, fu'
I do' mean no erfence,

Dey's a lesson in dem birds fu'
me an' you.

I's a-buil'in' o' my cabin, an' I's
vines erbove de do'

Fu' to kin' o' gin it sheltah f'om
de sun;

Gwine to have a little kitchen wid
a reg'lar wooden flo',

An' dey'll be a back verandy
w'en hit's done.

I's a-waitin' fu' you, Lucy, tek de
'zample o' de birds,

Dat's a-lovin' an' a-matin' evah-
whaih.

I cain' tell you dat I loves you in
de robin's music wo'ds,

But my cabin's talkin' fu' me
ovah thaih!

JOGGIN' ERLONG

DE da'kest hour, dey allus say,
Is des' befo' de dawn,

But it's moughty ha'd a-waitin'
W'ere de night goes frownin'
on;

An' it's moughty ha'd a-hopin'
W'en de clouds is big an' black,
An' all de t'ings you's waited fu'
Has failed, er gone to wrack —
But des' keep on a-joggin' wid a
little bit o' song,

De mo'n is allus brightah w'en de
night's been long.

Dey's lots o' knocks you's got to
tek

Befo' yo' journey's done,
An' dey's times w'en you'll be
wishin'

Dat de weary race was run;
W'en you want to give up tryin'
An' des' float erpon de wave,
W'en you don't feel no mo' sorrer
Ez you t'ink erbout de grave —
Den, des' keep on a-joggin' wid a
little bit o' song,
De mo'n is allus brightah w'en de
night's been long.

De whup-lash sting a good deal
mo'

De back hit's knowed befo',
An' de burden's allus heavies'
Whaih hits weight has made a
so';

Dey is times w'en tribulation
Seems to git de uppah han'
An' to whip de weary trav'lah
'Twell he ain't got stren'th to
star'—

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

But des' keep on a-joggin' wid a
 little bit o' song,
De mo'n is allus brightah w'en de
 night's been long.

IN MAY

OH to have you in May,
 To talk with you under the
 trees,
Dreaming throughout the day,
 Drinking the wine-like breeze,

Oh it were sweet to think
 That May should be ours again,
Hoping it not, I shrink,
 Out of the sight of men.

May brings the flowers to bloom,
 It brings the green leaves to the
 tree,
And the fatally sweet perfume,
 Of what you once were to me.

DREAMS

WHAT dreams we have and how
 they fly
Like rosy clouds across the sky;
 Of wealth, of fame, of sure suc-
 cess,
 Of love that comes to cheer
 and bless;
And how they wither, how they
 fade,
The waning wealth, the jilting
 jade —

The fame that for a moment
 gleams,
Then flies forever,— dreams, ah
 — dreams!

O burning doubt and long regret,
O tears with which our eyes are
 wet,
Heart-throbs, heart-aches, the
 glut of pain,
The somber cloud, the bitter
 rain,
You were not of those dreams —
 ah! well,
Your full fruition who can tell?
Wealth, fame, and love, ah!
 love that beams
Upon our souls, all dreams —
 ah! dreams.

THE TRYST

DE night creep down erlong de
 lan',
De shadders rise an' shake,
De frog is sta'tin' up his ban',
De cricket is awake;
My wo'k is mos' nigh done, Celes',
To'-night I won't be late,
I's hu'yin' thoo my level bes',
Wait fu' me by de gate.
De mockin'-bird 'll sen' his glee
A-thrillin' thoo and thoo,
I know dat ol' magnolia-tree
Is smellin' des' fu' you;
De jessamine erside de road
Is bloomin' rich an' white,

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

My hea't's a-th'obbin' 'cause it
 knowed
You 'd wait fu' me to-night.

Hit's lonesome, ain't it, stan'in'
 thaih

Wid no one nigh to talk?
But ain't dey whispahs in de aih
 Erlong de gyahden walk?

Don't somep'n kin' o' call my
 name,

An' say "he love you bes' "?
Hit's true, I wants to say de
 same,
So wait fu' me, Celes'.

Sing somep'n fu' to pass de time,
 Outsing de mockin'-bird,
You got de music an' de rhyme,
 You beat him wid de word.
I's comin' now, my wo'k is done,
 De hour has come fu' res',
I wants to fly, but only run —
 Wait fu' me, deah Celes'.

A PLEA

TREAT me nice, Miss Mandy
 Jane,

Treat me nice.

Dough my love has tu'ned my
 brain,

Treat me nice.

I ain't done a t'ing to shame,
Lovahs all ac's jes' de same:

Don't you know we ain't to blame?
 Treat me nice!

Cose I know I's talkin' wild;
 Treat me nice;

I cain't talk no bettah, child,
 Treat me nice;

Whut a pusson gwine to do,
W'en he come a-cou'tin' you
All a-trimblin' thoo and thoo?
 Please be nice.

Reckon I mus' go de paf
 Othahs do:

Lovahs lingah, ladies laff;

Mebbe you
Do' mean all the things you say,
An' pu'haps some latah day
W'en I baig you ha'd, you may
 Treat me nice!

THE DOVE

OUT of the sunshine and out of
 the heat,

Out of the dust of the grimy
 street,

A song fluttered down in the form
 of a dove,

And it bore me a message, the one
 word — Love!

Ah, I was toiling, and oh, I was
 sad:

I had forgotten the way to be glad.
Now, smiles for my sadness and
 for my toil, rest

Since the dove fluttered down to
 its home in my breast!

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

A WARM DAY IN WINTER

"SUNSHINE on de medders,
Greenness on de way;
Dat's de blessed reason
I sing all de day."
Look hyeah! Whut you axin'?
Whut meks me so merry?
'Spect to see me sighin'
W'en hit's wa'm in Febawary?

'Long de stake an' rider
Seen a robin set;
W'y, hit 'mence a-thawin',
Groun' is monst'ous wet.
Den you stan' dah wond'rin',
Lookin' skeert an' stary;
I's a right to caper
W'en hit's wa'm in Febawary.

Missis gone a-drivin',
Mastah gone to shoot;
Ev'ry da'ky lazin'
In de sun to boot.
Qua'tah's moughty pleasant,
Hangin' 'roun' my Mary;
Cou'tin' boun' to prospah
W'en hit's wa'm in Febawary.

Cidah look so pu'ty
Po'in' f'om de jug —
Don' you see it's happy?
Hyeah it laffin'—glug?
Now's de time fu' people
Fu' to try an' bury
All dey grief an' sorrer,
W'en hit's wa'm in Febawary.

SNOWIN'

DEY is snow upon de meddahs,
dey is snow upon de hill,
An' de little branch's watahs is
all glistenin' an' still;
De win' goes roun' de cabin lak a
sperrit wan'erin' 'roun'.
An' de chillen shakes an' shivahs
as dey listen to de soun'.
Dey is hick'ry in de fiahplace,
whah de blaze is risin' high,
But de heat it meks ain't wa'min'
up de gray clouds in de sky.
Now an' den I des peep outside,
den I hurries to de do',
Lawd a mussy on my body, how I
wish it would n't snow!

I kin stan' de hottes' summah, I
kin stan' de wettes' fall,
I kin stan' de chilly springtime in
de ploughland, but dat's
all;
Fu' de ve'y hottes' fiah nevah tells
my skin a t'ing,
W'en de snow commence a-flyin',
an' de win' begin to sing.
Dey is plenty wood erroun' us, an'
I chop an' tote it in,
But de t'oughts dat I's a t'inkin'
while I's wo'kin' is a sin.
I kin keep f'om downright swahin'
all de time I's on de go,
But my hea't is full o' cuss-wo'ds
w'en I's trampin' thoo de
snow.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

What you say, you Lishy Davis,
dat you see a possum's tracks?

Look hyeah, boy, you stop yo'
foolin', bring ol' Spot, an'
bring de ax.

Is I col'? Go way, now, Mandy,
what you t'ink I's made of?
— sho,

W'y dis win' is des ez gentle, an'
dis ain't no kin' o' snow.

Dis hyeah weathah 's des ez healthy
ez de wa'mest summah days.

All you chillen step up lively, pile
on wood an' keep a blaze.

What's de use o' gittin' skeery
case dey's snow upon de
groun'?

Huh-uh, I's a reg'lar snowbird ef
dey's any possum 'roun'.

Go on, Spot, don' be so foolish;
don' you see de signs o' feet.

What you howlin' fu? Keep still,
suh, cose de col' is putty
sweet;

But we goin' out on bus'ness, an'
hit's bus'ness o' de kin'

Dat mus' put a dog an' dahky in
a happy frame o' min'.

Yes, you's col'; I know it, Spotty,
but you des stay close to me,

An' I'll mek you hot ez cotton
w'en we strikes de happy tree.

No, I don' lak wintah weathah,
an' I'd wush 't uz allus
June,

Ef it was n't fu' de trackin' o' de
possum an' de coon.

KEEP A SONG UP ON DE WAY

OH, de clouds is mighty heavy
An' de rain is mighty thick;

Keep a song up on de way.
An' de waters is a rumblin'
On de boulders in de crick,

Keep a song up on de way.
Fu' a bird ercross de road
Is a-singin' lak he knowed
Dat we people did n't daih
Fu' to try de rainy aih

Wid a song up on de way.

What's de use o' gittin' mopy,
Case de weather ain' de bes'!

Keep a song up on de way.
W'en de rain is fallin' ha'des',
Dey's de longes' times to res'

Keep a song up on de way.
Dough de plough's a-stan'in' still
Dey'll be watah fu' de mill,
Rain mus' come ez well ez sun
'Fo' de weathah's wo'k is done,

Keep a song up on de way.

W'y hit's nice to hyeah de showahs
Fallin' down ermong de trees:

Keep a song up on de way.
Ef de birds don' bothah 'bout it,
But go singin' lak dey please,

Keep a song up on de way.
You don' s'pose I's gwine to see
Dem ah fowls do mo' dan me?
No, suh, I'll des chase dis frown,
An' aldough de rain fall down,

Keep a song up on de way.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

THE TURNING OF THE BABIES IN THE BED

WOMAN 's sho' a cur'ous critter,
an' dey ain't no doubtin' dat.
She 's a mess o' funny capahs f'om
huh slippahs to huh hat.

Ef you tries to un'erstan' huh, an'
you fails, des' up an' say:

"D' ain't a bit o' use to try to
un'erstan' a woman's way."

I don' mean to be complainin', but
I 's jes' a-settin' down

Some o' my own obseruations,
w'en I cas' my eye eroun'.

Ef you ax me fu' to prove it, I
ken do it mighty fine,

Fu' dey ain't no bettah 'zample
den dis ve'y wife o' mine.

In de ve'y hea't o' midnight, w'en
I 's sleepin' good an' soun',

I kin hyeah a so't o' rustlin' an'
somebody movin' 'roun'.

An' I say, "Lize, whut you do-
in'?" But she frown an' shek
huh haid,

"Heish yo' mouf, I 's only tu'nin'
of de chillun in de bed.

"Don' you know a chile gits rest-
less, layin' all de night one
way?

An' you' got to kind o' 'range him
sev'al times befo' de day?

So de little necks won't worry, an'
de little backs won't break;

Don' you t'ink case chillun 's chil-
lun dey hain't got no pain an'
ache."

So she shakes 'em, an' she twists
'em, an' she tu'ns 'em 'roun'
erbout,

'Twell I don' see how de chillun
evah keeps f'om hollahin' out.

Den she lif's 'em up head down-
'ards, so 's dey won't git livah-
grown,

But dey snoozes des' ez peaceful,
ez a liza'd on a stone.

W'en hit's mos' nigh time fu'
wakin' on de dawn o' jedg-
ment day,

Seems lak I kin hyeah ol' Gab'iel
lay his trumpet down an' say,
"Who dat walkin' 'roun' so easy,
down on earf ermong de
dead?"—

'T will be Lizy up a-tu'nin' of de
chillun in de bed.

THE DANCE

HEEL and toe, heel and toe,

That is the song we sing;

Turn to your partner and curtsey
low,

Balance and forward and swing.

Corners are draughty and meadows
are white,

This is the game for a winter's
night.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Hands around, hands around,
Trip it, and not too slow;
Clear is the fiddle and sweet its
sound,

Keep the girls' cheeks aglow.
Still let your movements be dainty
and light,
This is the game for a winter's
night.

Back to back, back to back,
Turn to your place again;
Never let lightness nor nimble-
ness lack,

Either in maidens or men.
Time hasteth ever, beware of its
flight,
Oh, what a game for a winter's
night!

Slower now, slower now,
Softer the music sighs;
Look, there are beads on your
partner's brow

Though there be light in her
eyes.

Lead her away and her grace re-
quite,

So goes the game on a winter's
night.

SOLILOQUY OF A TURKEY

DEY 's a so't o' threatenin' feelin'
in de blowin' of de breeze,
An' I 's feelin' kin' o' squeamish
in de night;

I 's a-walkin' 'roun' a-lookin' at
de diffunt style o' trees,
An' a-measurin' dey thickness
an' dey height.

Fu' dey 's somep'n mighty 'spicious
in de looks de da'kies give,
Ez dey pass me an' my fambly
on de groun',

So it 'curs to me dat lakly, ef I
caih's to try an' live,
It concehns me fu' to 'mence to
look erroun'.

Dey 's a cu'ious kin' o' shivah
runnin' up an' down my back,
An' I feel my feddahs rufflin'
all de day,

An' my laigs commence to trimble
evah blessid step I mek;

W'en I sees a ax, I tu'ns my
head away.

Folks is go'gin' me wid goodies,
an' dey 's treatin' me wid caih,
An' I 's fat in spite of all dat I
kin do.

I 's mistrus'ful of de kin'ness dat 's
erroun' me evahwhaih,

Fu' it 's jes' too good, an' fre-
quent, to be true.

Snow 's a-fallin' on de medders, all
erroun' me now is white,

But I 's still kep' on a-roostin'
on de fence;

Isham comes an' feels my breas'-
bone, an' he hefted me las'
night,

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

An' he 's gone erroun' a-grinnin'
evah sence.

'T ain't de snow dat meks me
shivah; 't ain't de col' dat
meks me shake;

'T ain't de wintah-time itse'f
dat 's 'fectin' me;

But I t'ink de time is comin',
an' I'd bettah mek a break,
Fu' to set wid Mistah Possum
in his tree.

W'en you hyeah de da'kies singin',
an' de quahtahs all is gay,
'T ain't de time fu' birds lak me
to be 'erroun';

W'en de hick'ry chips is flyin', an'
de log 's been ca'ied erway,
Den hit 's dang'ous to be roostin'
nigh he groun'.

Grin on, Isham! Sing on, da'k-
ies! But I flop my wings an'
go

Fu' de sheltah of de ve'y high-
est tree,

Fu' dey 's too much close ertention
— an' dey's too much fallin'
snow —

An' it's too nigh Chris'mus
mo'nin' now fu' me.

FISHING

W'EN I git up in de mo'nin' an'
de clouds is big an' black,

Dey 's a kin' o' wa'nin' shivah goes
a-scootin' down my back;

Den I says to my ol' ooman ez I
watches down de lane,

"Don't you so't o' reckon, Lizy,
dat we gwine to have some
rain?"

"Go on, man," my Lizy answah,
"you cain't fool me, not a
bit,

I don't see no rain a-comin', ef
you 's wishin' fu' it, quit;

Case de mo' you t'ink erbout it, an
de mo' you pray an' wish,

W'y de rain stay 'way de longah,
specul ef you wants to fish."

But I see huh pat de skillet, an' I
see huh cas' huh eye

Wid a kin' o' anxious motion to'ds
de da'kness in de sky;

An' I knows whut she 's a-t'inkin',
dough she tries so ha'd to
hide.

She 's a-sayin', "Would n't catfish
now tas'e monst'ous bully,
fried?"

Den de clouds git black an' black-
ah, an' de thundah 'mence to
roll,

An' de rain, it 'mence a-fallin'.
Oh, I's happy, bless my
soul!

Ez I look at dat ol' skillet, an' I
'magine I kin see

Jes' a slew o' new-ketched catfish
sizzlin' dahh fu' huh an' me.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

'T ain't no use to go a-ploughin',
fu' de groun' 'll be too
wet,

So I puts out fu' de big house at
a moughty pace, you bet,

An' ol' mastah say, "Well, Lishy,
ef you t'ink hit's gwine to
rain,

Go on fishin', hit's de weathah,
an' I 'low we cain't com-
plain."

Talk erbout a dahky walkin' wid
his haid up in de aih!

Have to feel mine evah minute to
be sho' I got it daih;

En' de win' is cuttin' capahs an'
a-lashin' thoo de trees,

But de rain keeps on a-singin'
blessed songs, lak "Tek yo'
ease."

Wid my pole erpon my shouldah
an' my wo'm can in my
han',

I kin feel de fish a-waitin' w'en I
strikes de rivah's san';

Nevah min', you ho'ny scoun'els,
need n' swim erroun' an'
grin,

I 'll be grinnin' in a minute w'en I
'mence to haul you in.

W'en de fish begin to nibble, an'
de co'k begin to jump,

I's erfeahed dat dey 'll quit bitin',
case dey hyeah my hea't go
"thump,"

'Twell de co'k go way down
undah, an' I raise a awful
shout,

Ez a big ol' yallah belly comes a
gallivantin' out.

Need n't wriggle, Mistah Catfish,
case I got you jes' de same,

You been eatin', I 'll be eatin', an'
we needah ain't to blame.

But you need n't feel so lonesome
fu' I 's th'owin' out to see

Ef dey ain't some of yo' comrades
fu' to keep you company.

Spo't, dis fishin'! now you talkin',
w'y dey ain't no kin' to beat;

I don' keer ef I is soakin', laigs,
an' back, an' naik, an' feet,

It's de spo't I's lookin' aftah.
Hit's de pleasure an' de fun,

Dough I knows dat Lizy's waitin'
wid de skillet w'en I's done.

A PLANTATION PORTRAIT

HAIN'T you see my Mandy Lou,
Is it true?

Whaih you been f'om day to day,
Whaih, I say?

Dat you say you nevah seen
Dis hyeah queen

Walkin' roun' f'om fiel' to street
Smilin' sweet?

Slendah ez a saplin' tree;
Seems to me

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

W'en de win' blow f'om de bay
 She jes' sway
 Lak de reg'lar saplin' do
 Ef hit's grew
 Straight an' graceful, 'dout a limb,
 Sweet an' slim.

Browner den de frush's wing,
 An' she sing
 Lak he mek his wa'ble ring
 In de spring;
 But she sholy beat de frush,
 Hyeah me, hush:
 W'en she sing, huh teef kin show
 White ez snow.

Eyes ez big an' roun' an' bright
 Ez de light
 Whut de moon gives in de prime
 Harvest time.
 An' huh haih a woolly skein,
 Black an' plain.
 Hol's you wid a natchul twis'
 Close to bliss.

Tendah han's dat mek yo' own
 Feel lak stone;
 Easy steppin', blessid feet,
 Small an' sweet.
 Hain't you seen my Mandy Lou,
 Is it true?
 Look at huh befo' she's gone,
 Den pass on!

A LITTLE CHRISTMAS BASKET

DE win' is hollahin' "Daih you"
 to de shuttaks an' de fiah,

De snow's a-sayin' "'Got you" to
 de groun',
 Fu' de wintah weathah's come
 widout a-askin' ouah de-
 siah,
 An' he's laughin' in his sleeve
 at whut he foun';
 Fu' dey ain't nobody ready wid
 dey fuel er dey food,
 An' de money bag look timid
 lak, fu' sho',
 So we want ouah Chrismus
 sermon, but we'd lak it ef
 you could
 Leave a little Chrismus basket
 at de do'.

Wha's de use o' tellin' chillen
 'bout a Santy er a Nick,
 An' de sto'ies dat a body allus
 tol'?
 When de harf is gray wid ashes
 an' you has n't got a stick
 Fu' to warm dem when dey
 little toes is col'?
 Wha's de use o' preachin' 'ligion
 to a man dat's sta'ved to
 def,
 An' a-tellin' him de Mastah
 will pu'vide?
 Ef you want to tech his feelin's,
 save yo' sermons an' yo'
 bref,
 Tek a little Chrismus basket by
 yo' side.

'T ain't de time to open Bibles an'
 to lock yo' cellah do',

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

'T ain't de time to talk o' bein'
good to men;
Ef you want to preach a sermon
ez you nevah preached
befo',
Preach dat sermon wid a shoat
er wid er hen;
Bein' good is heap sight bettah den
a-dallyin' wid sin,
An' dey ain't nobody roun' dat
knows it mo',
But I t'ink dat 'ligion's sweeter
w'en it kind o' mixes in
Wid a little Chrismus basket at
de do'.

THE VALSE

WHEN to sweet music my lady
is dancing
My heart to mild frenzy her
beauty inspires.
Into my face are her brown eyes
a-glancing,
And swift my whole frame
thrills with tremulous fires.
Dance, lady, dance, for the mo-
ments are fleeting,
Pause not to place yon refractory
curl;
Life is for love and the night is
for sweeting;
Dreamily, joyously, circle and
whirl.

Oh, how those viols are throbbing
and pleading;

A prayer is scarce needed in
sound of their strain.
Surely and lightly as round you
are speeding,
You turn to confusion my heart
and my brain.
Dance, lady, dance to the viol's
soft calling,
Skip it and trip it as light as the
air;
Dance, for the moments like rose
leaves are falling,
Strikes, now, the clock from its
place on the stair.

Now sinks the melody lower and
lower,

The weary musicians scarce
seeming to play.

Ah, love, your steps now are
slower and slower,

The smile on your face is more
sad and less gay.

Dance, lady, dance to the brink of
our parting,

My heart and your step must not
fail to be light.

Dance! Just a turn — tho' the
tear-drop be starting.

Ah — now it is done — so —
my lady, good-night!

REPOSE

WHEN Phyllis sighs and from her
eyes

The light dies out; my soul re-
plies

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

With misery of deep-drawn breath,
E'en as it were at war with
death.

When Phyllis smiles, her glance
beguiles

My heart through love-lit wood-
land aisles,

And through the silence high and
clear,

A wooing warbler's song I hear.

But if she frown, despair comes
down,

I put me on my sack-cloth gown;
So frown not, Phyllis, lest I die,
But look on me with smile or
sigh.

MY SWEET BROWN GAL

W'EN de clouds is hangin' heavy
in de sky,

An' de win's's a-taihin' moughty
vig'rous by,

I don' go a-sighin' all erlong de
way;

I des' wo'k a-waitin' fu' de close
o' day.

Case I knows w'en evenin' draps
huh shadders down,

I won' care a smidgeon fu' de
weathah's frown;

Let de rain go splashin', let de
thundah raih,

Dey's a happy sheltah, an' I's
goin' daih.

Down in my ol' cabin wa'm ez
mammy's toas',

'Taters in de fiah layin' daih to
roas';

No one daih to cross me, got no
talkin' pal,

But I's got de comp'ny o' my
sweet brown gal.

So I spen's my evenin' listenin' to
huh sing,

Lak a blessid angel; how huh
voice do ring!

Sweetah den a bluebird flutterin'
erroun',

W'en he sees de steamin' o' de
new ploughed groun'.

Den I hugs huh closah, closah to
my breas'.

Need n't sing, my da'lin', tek you'
hones' res'.

Does I mean Malindy, Mandy,
Lize er Sal?

No, I means my fiddle — dat's
my sweet brown gal!

SPRING FEVER

GRASS commence a-comin'
'Thoo de thawin' groun',

Evah bird dat whistles

Keepin' noise erroun';

Cain't sleep in de mo'nin',

Case befo' it's light

Bluebird an' de robin,

Done begun to fight.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Bluebird sass de robin,
Robin sass him back,
Den de bluebird scol' him
'Twell his face is black.
Would n' min' de quoin'
All de mo'nin' long,
'Cept it wakes me early,
Case hit's done in song.

Anybody wo'kin'
Wants to sleep ez late
Ez de folks'll 'low him,
An' I wish to state
(Co'se dis ain't to scattah,
But 'twix' me an' you),
I could stan' de bedclothes,
Kin' o' latah, too.

'T ain't my natchul feelin',
Dis hyeah mopin' spell.
I stan's early risin'
Mos'ly moughty well;
But de ve'y minute,
I feel Ap'il's heat,
Bless yo' soul, de bedclothes
Nevah seemed so sweet.

Mastah, he's a-scol'in',
Case de han's is slow,
All de hosses balkin',
Jes' cain't mek 'em go.
Don' know whut's de mattah,
Hit's a funny t'ing,
Less'n hit's de fevah
Dat you gits in spring.

THE VISITOR

LITTLE lady at de do',
W'y you stan' dey knockin'?
Nevah seen you ac' befo'
In er way so shockin'.
Don' you know de sin it is
Fu' to git my temper riz
W'en I's got de rheumatiz
An' my jints is lockin'?

No, ol' Miss ain't sont you down,
Don' you tell no story;
I been seed you hangin' 'roun'
Dis hyeah te'itory.
You des come fu' me to tell
You a tale, an' I ain'—
well —

Look hyeah, what is dat I
smell?

Steamin' victuals? Glory!

Come in, Missy, how you do?
Come up by de fiah,
I was jokin', chile, wid you;
Bring dat basket nighah.
Huh uh, ain't dat lak ol'
Miss,

Sen'in' me a feas' lak dis?
Rheumatiz cain't stop my
bliss,

Case I's feelin' spryah.

Chicken meat an' gravy, too,
Hot an' still a-heatin';
Good ol' sweet pertater stew;
Missy b'lieves in treatin'.
Des set down, you blessed
chile,

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

Daddy got to t'ink a while,
Den a story mek you smile
W'en he git thoo eatin'.

Stir yo' stumps an' cleah de
way,
Fu' de music dat dey mekin' can't
be beat.

SONG

WINTAH, summah, snow er
shine,

Hit's all de same to me,
Ef only I kin call you mine,
An' keep you by my knee.

Ha'dship, frolic, grief er caih,
Content by night an' day,
Ef only I kin see you whaih
You wait beside de way.

Livin', dyin', smiles er teahs,.
My soul will still be free,
Ef only thoo de comin' yeahs
You walk de worl' wid me.

Bird-song, breeze-wail, 'chune er
moan,

What puny t'ings dey 'll be,
Ef w'en I's seemin' all erlone,
I knows yo' hea't's wid me.

THE COLORED BAND

W'EN de colo'ed ban' comes
ma'chin' down de street,
Don't you people stan' daih
starin'; lif' yo' feet!
Ain't dey playin'? Hip, hoo-
ray!

Oh, de major man's a-swingin'
of his stick,
An' de pickaninnies crowdin'
roun' him thick;
In his go'geous uniform,
He's de lightnin' of de sto'm,
An' de little clouds erroun' look
mighty slick.

You kin hyeah a fine perfo'mance
w'en de white ban's sere-
nade,

An' dey play dey high-toned
music mighty sweet,
But hit's Sousa played in rag-
time, an' hit's Rastus on
Parade,

W'en de colo'ed ban' comes
ma'chin' down de street.

W'en de colo'ed ban' comes ma'ch-
in' down de street

You kin hyeah de ladies all erroun'
repeat:

"Ain't dey handsome? Ain't
dey gran'?"

Ain't dey splendid? Goodness,
lan'!

W'y dey's pu'fect f'om dey fo'-
heads to dey feet!"

An' sich steppin' to de music down
de line,

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

'T ain't de music by itself dat meks
it fine,

Hit 's de walkin', step by step,
An' de keepin' time wid "Hep,"
Dat it mek a common ditty soun'
divine.

Oh, de white ban' play hits music,
an' hit 's mighty good to
hyeah,

An' it sometimes leaves a ticklin'
in yo' feet;

But de hea't goes into bus'ness fu'
to he'p erlong de eah,

W'en de colo'ed ban' goes ma'ch-
in' down de street.

Or does some brighter spirit, un-
forlorn,

Send you, my little sister of the
wood,

To say to some one on a cloudful
morn,

"Life lives through death, my
brother, all is good?"

With meditative hearts the others
go

The memory of their dead to
dress anew.

But, sister mine, bide here that I
may know,

Life grows, through death, as
beautiful as you.

TO A VIOLET FOUND ON ALL SAINTS' DAY

BELATED wanderer of the ways of
spring,

'Lost in the chill of grim No-
vember rain,

Would I could read the message
that you bring

And find in it the antidote for
pain.

Does some sad spirit out beyond
the day,

Far looking to the hours forever
dead,

Send you a tender offering to lay
Upon the grave of us, the liv-
ing dead?

INSPIRATION

At the golden gate of song
Stood I, knocking all day long,
But the Angel, calm and cold,
Still refused and bade me, "Hold."

Then a breath of soft perfume,
Then a light within the gloom;
Thou, Love, camest to my side,
And the gates flew open wide.

Long I dwelt in this domain,
Knew no sorrow, grief, or pain;
Now you bid me forth and free,
Will you shut these gates on me?

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

MY LADY OF CASTLE GRAND

GRAY is the palace where she
dwells,

Grimly the poplars stand
There by the window where she
sits,
My Lady of Castle Grand.

There does she bide the livelong
day,

Grim as the poplars are,
Ever her gaze goes reaching out,
Steady, but vague and far.

Bright burn the fires in the castle
hall,

Brightly the fire-dogs stand;
But cold is the body and cold the
heart
Of my Lady of Castle Grand.

Blue are the veins in her lily-white
hands,

Blue are the veins in her brow;
Thin is the line of her blue drawn
lips,

Who would be haughty now?

Pale is the face at the window-
pane,

Pale as the pearl on her breast,
"Roderick, love, wilt come again?
Fares he to east or west?"

The shepherd pipes to the shep-
herdess,

The bird to his mate in the
tree,

And ever she sighs as she hears
their song,
"Nobody sings for me."

The scullery maids have swains
enow

Who lead them the way of love,
But lonely and loveless their mis-
tress sits
At her window up above.

Loveless and lonely she waits and
waits,

The saddest in all the land;
Ah, cruel and lasting is love-blind
pride,

My Lady of Castle Grand.

DRIZZLE

HIT's been drizzlin' an' been
sprinklin',

Kin' o' techy all day long.
I ain't wet enough fu' toddy,
I's too damp to raise a song,
An' de case have set me t'inkin',

Dat dey's folk des lak de rain,
Dat goes drizzlin' w'en dey's
talkin',

An' won't speak out flat an'
plain.

Ain't you nevah set an' listened
At a body 'splain his min'?

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

W'en de t'oughts dey keep on
drappin'

Was n't big enough to fin'?
Dem's whut I call drizzlin'
people,

Othahs call 'em mealy mouf,
But de fust name hits me bettah,
Case dey nevah tech a drouf.

Dey kin talk from hyeah to yandah,
An' f'om yandah hyeah ergain,
An' dey don' mek no mo' 'pression,
Den dis powd'ry kin' o' rain.

En yo' min' is dry ez cindahs,
Er a piece o' kindlin' wood,
'Tain't no use a-talkin' to 'em,
Fu' dey drizzle ain't no good.

Gimme folks dat speak out nachul,
Whut 'll say des whut dey mean,
Whut don't set dey wo'ds so
skimpy

Dat you got to guess between.
I want talk des' lak de showahs
Whut kin wash de dust erway,
Not dat sprinklin' convusation,
Dat des drizzle all de day.

DE CRITTERS' DANCE

Ain't nobody nevah tol' you not a
wo'd a-tall,

'Bout de time dat all de critters
gin dey fancy ball?

Some folks tell it in a sto'y, some
folks sing de rhyme,

'Peahs to me you ought to hyeahed
it, case hit's ol' ez time.

Well, de critters all was p'osp'ous,
now would be de chance

Fu' to tease ol' Pa'son Hedgehog,
givin' of a dance;

Case, you know, de critters'
preachah was de stric'est kin',
An' he nevah made no 'lowance fu'
de frisky min'.

So dey sont dey inbitations, Rac-
coon writ 'em all,

"Dis hyeah note is to inbite you
to de Fancy Ball;

Come erlong an' bring yo' ladies,
bring yo' chillun too,

Put on all yo' bibs an' tuckahs,
show whut you kin do."

W'en de night come, dey all
gathahed in a place dey
knowed,

Fu' enough erway f'om people,
nigh enough de road,

All de critters had ersponded, Hop-
Toad up to Baih,

An' I's hyeah to tell you, Pa'son
Hedgehog too, was daih.

Well, dey talked an' made dey
'bejunce, des lak critters
do,

An' dey walked an' p'omenaded
'roun' an' thoo an' thoo;

Jealous ol' Mis' Fox, she whispah,
"See Mis' Wildcat daih,

Ain't hit scan'lous, huh a-comin'
wid huh shouldahs baih?"

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

Ol' man T'utle was n't honin' fu'
 no dancin' tricks,
 So he stayed by ol' Mis' Tu'tle,
 talkin' politics;
 Den de ban' hit 'mence a-playin'
 critters all to place,
 Fou' ercross an' fou' stan' side-
 ways, smilin' face to face.

'Fessah Frog, he play de co'net,
 Cricket play de fife,
 Slews o' Grasshoppahs a-fiddlin'
 lak to save dey life;
 Mistah Crow, 'he call de figgers,
 settin' in a tree,
 Huh, uh! how dose critters sas-
 shayed was a sight to see.

Mistah Possom swing Mis' Rab-
 bit up an' down de flo',
 Ol' man Baih, he ain't so nimble,
 an' it mek him blow;
 Raccoon dancin' wid Mis' Squ'il
 squeeze huh little han',
 She say, "Oh, now ain't you aw-
 ful, quit it, goodness lan'!"

Pa'son Hedgehog groanin' awful at
 his converts' shines,
 'Dough he peepin' thoo his fingahs
 at dem movin' lines,
 'Twell he cain't set still no longah
 w'en de fiddles sing,
 Up he jump, an' bless ypu, honey,
 cut de pigeon-wing.

Well, de critters lak to fainted jes'
 wid dey su'prise,

Sistah Fox, she vowed she was n't
 gwine to b'lieve huh eyes;
 But dey could n't be no 'sputin'
 'bout it any mo':
 Pa'son Hedgehog was a-cape'in' all
 erroun' de flo.'

Den dey all jes' capahed scan'lous
 case dey did n't doubt,
 Dat dey still could go to meetin';
 who could tu'n 'em out?
 So wid dancin' an' uligion, dey
 was in de fol',
 Fu' a-dancin' wid de Pa'son could-
 n't hu't de soul.

WHEN DEY 'LISTED COL- ORED SOLDIERS

DEY was talkin' in de cabin, dey
 was talkin' in de hall;
 But I listened kin' o' keerless, not
 a-t'inkin' 'bout it all;
 An' on Sunday, too, I noticed, dey
 was whisp'rin' mighty much,
 Stan'in' all erroun' de roadside
 w'en dey let us out o'
 chu'ch.
 But I did n't t'ink erbout it 'twell
 de middle of de week,
 An' my 'Lias come to see me, an'
 somehow he could n't speak.
 Den I seed all in a minute whut
 he'd come to see me
 for;—
 Dey had 'listed colo'ed sojers an'
 my 'Lias gwine to wah.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Oh, I hugged him, an' I kissed
him, an' I baiged him not to
go;

But he tol' me dat his conscience,
hit was callin' to him so,

An' he could n't baih to lingah
w'en he had a chanst to
fight

For de freedom dey had gin him
an' de glory of de right.

So he kissed me, an' he lef' me,
w'en I'd p'omised to be true;

An' dey put a knapsack on him,
an' a coat all colo'ed blue.

So I gin him pap's ol' Bible f'om
de bottom of de draw',—

W'en dey 'listed colo'ed sojers an'
my 'Lias went to wah.

But I t'ought of all de weary miles
dat he would have to tramp,
An' I could n't be contented w'en
dey tuk him to de camp.

W'y my hea't nigh broke wid
grievin' 'twell I seed him on
de street;

Den I felt lak I could go an' th'ow
my body at his feet.

For his buttons was a-shinin', an'
his face was shinin', too,

An' he looked so strong an' mighty
in his coat o' sojer blue,

Dat I hollahed, "Step up, man-
ny," dough my th'coat was so'
an' raw,—

W'en dey 'listed colo'ed sojers an'
my 'Lias went to wah.

Ol' Mis' cried w'en mastah lef'
huh, young Miss mou'ned huh
brothah Ned,

An' I did n't know dey feelin's is
de ve'y wo'ds dey said

W'en I tol' 'em I was so'y. Dey
had done gin up dey all;

But dey only seemed mo' proudah
dat dey men had hyeahed de
call.

Bofe my mastahs went in gray
suits, an' I loved de Yankee
blue,

But I t'ought dat I could sorrer
for de losin' of 'em too;

But I could n't, for I did n't know
de ha'f o' whut I saw,

'Twell dey 'listed colo'ed sojers an'
my 'Lias went to wah.

Mastah Jack come home all sickly;
he was broke for life, dey
said;

An' dey lef' my po' young mastah
some'r's on de roadside,—
dead.

W'en de women cried an' mou'ned
'em, I could feel it thoo an'
thoo,

For I had a loved un fightin' in de
way o' dangah, too.

Den dey tol' me dey had laid him
some'r's way down souf to
res',

Wid de flag dat he had fit for
shinin' daih acrost his
breas'.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

Well, I cried, but den I reckon
dat 's whut Gawd had called
him for,
W'en dey 'listed colo'ed sojers an'
my 'Lias went to wah.

LINCOLN

HURT was the nation with a
mighty wound,
And all her ways were filled with
clam'rous sound.
Wailed loud the South with unre-
mitting grief,
And wept the North that could
not find relief.
Then madness joined its harshest
tone to strife:
A minor note swelled in the song
of life.
'Till, stirring with the love that
filled his breast,
But still, unflinching at the right's
behest,
Grave Lincoln came, strong
handed, from afar,
The mighty Homer of the lyre of
war.
'T was he who bade the raging
tempest cease,
Wrenched from his harp the har-
mony of peace,
Muted the strings, that made the
discord,— Wrong,
And gave his spirit up in thun-
d'rous song.

Oh mighty Master of the mighty
lyre,
Earth heard and trembled at thy
strains of fire:
Earth learned of thee what Heav'n
already knew,
And wrote thee down among her
treasured few.

ENCOURAGEMENT

WHO dat knockin' at de do'?
Why, Ike Johnson,— yes, fu' sho!
Come in, Ike. I 's mighty glad
You come down. I t'ought you 's
mad
At me 'bout de othah night,
An' was stayin' 'way fu' spite.
Say, now, was you mad fu' true
W'en I kin' o' laughed at you?
Speak up, Ike, an' 'spress yo'se'f.
'T ain't no use a-lookin' sad,
An' a-mekin' out you 's mad;
Ef you 's gwine to be so glum,
Wondah why you evah come.
I don't lak nobidy 'roun'
Dat jes' shet dey mouf an'
frown,—
Oh, now, man, don't act a dunce!
Cain't you talk? I tol' you once,
Speak up, Ike, an' 'spress yo'se'f.
Wha'd you come hyeah fu' to-
night?
Body'd t'ink yo' haid ain't right.
I 's done all dat I kin do,—

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Dressed perticler, jès' fu' you;
Reckon I 'd 'a' bettah wo'
My ol' ragged calico.
Aftah all de pains I 's took,
Cain't you tell me how I look?
Speak up, Ike, an' 'spress yo'se'f.

Bless my soul! I 'mos' fu'got
Tellin' you 'bout Tildy Scott.
Don't you know, come Thu'sday
night,
She gwine ma'y Lucius White?
Miss Lize say I allus wuh
Heap sight laklier 'n huh;
An' she 'll git me somep'n new,
Ef I wants to ma'y too.
Speak up, Ike, an' 'spress yo'se'f.

I could ma'y in a week,
Ef de man I wants 'ud speak.
Tildy's presents 'll be fine,
But dey would n't ekal mine.
Him whut gits me fu' a wife
'Ll be proud, you bet yo' life.
I 's had offers; some ain't quit;
But I has n't ma'ied yit!
Speak up, Ike, an' 'spress yo'se'f.

Ike, I loves you,—yes, I does;
You 's my choice, and allus was.
Laffin' at you ain't no harm.—
Go 'way, dahky, whah 's yo' arm?
Hug me closer — dah, dat 's
right!
Was n't you a awful sight,
Havin' me to baig you so?
Now ax whut you want to
know,—
Speak up, Ike, an' 'spress yo'se'f!

THE BOOGAH MAN

W'EN de evenin' shadders
Come a-glidin' down,
Fallin' black an' heavy
Ovah hill an' town,
Ef you listen keerful,
Keerful ez you kin,
So 's you boun' to notice
Des a drappin' pin;
Den you 'll hyeah a funny
Soun' ercross de lan';
Lay low; dat 's de callin'
Of de Boogah Man!

Woo-oo, woo-oo!

*Hyeah him ez he go erlong de
way;*

Woo-oo, woo-oo!

*Don' you wish de night 'ud tu'n
to day?*

Woo-oo, woo-oo!

*Hide yo' little peepers 'hind yo'
han';*

Woo-oo, woo-oo!

Callin' of de Boogah Man.

W'en de win 's a-shiverin'
Thoo de gloomy lane,
An' dey comes de patterin'
Of de evenin' rain,
W'en de owl 's a-hootin',
Out daih in de wood,
Don' you wish, my honey,
Dat you had been good?
'T ain't no use to try to
Snuggle up to Dan;
Bless you, dat 's de callin'
Of de Boogah Man!

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

Ef you loves yo' mammy,
An' you min's yo' pap,
Ef you nevah wriggles
Outen Sukey's lap;
Ef you says yo' "Lay me"
Evah single night
'Fo' dey tucks de kivers
An' puts out de light,
Den de rain kin pattah
Win' blow lak a fan,
But you need n' bothah
'Bout de Boogah Man!

THE WRAITH

AH me, it is cold and chill
And the fire sobs low in the
grate,
While the wind rides by on the
hill,
And the logs crack sharp with
hate.

And she, she is cold and sad
As ever the sinful are,
But deep in my heart I am glad
For my wound and the coming
scar.

Oh, ever the wind rides by
And ever the raindrops grieve;
But a voice like a woman's sigh
Says, "Do you believe, be-
lieve?"

Ah, you were warm and sweet,
Sweet as the May days be;

Down did I fall at your feet,
Why did you hearken to me?

Oh, the logs they crack and whine,
And the water drops from the
eaves;
But it is not rain but brine
Where my dead darling grieves.

And a wraith sits by my side,
A spectre grim and dark;
Are you gazing here open-eyed
Out to the lifeless dark?

But ever the wind rides on,
And we sit close within;
Out of the face of the dawn,
I and my darling,—sin.

SILENCE

'T is better to sit here beside the
sea,
Here on the spray-kissed beach,
In silence, that between such
friends as we
Is full of deepest speech.

WHIP-POOR-WILL AND KATY-DID

SLOW de night 's a-fallin',
An' I hyeah de callin,
Out erpon de lonesome hill;
Soun' is moughty dreary,
Solemn-lak an' skeery,
Sayin' fu' to "whip po' Will,"

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Now hit 's moughty tryin',
Fu' to hyeah dis cryin',
'Deed hit 's mo' den I kin stan';
Sho' wid all our slippin',
Dey 's enough of whippin'
'Dout a bird a'visin' any man.

In de noons o' summah
Dey 's anothah hummah
Sings anothah song instid;
An' his th' oat 's a-swellin'
Wid de joy o' tellin',
But he says dat "Katy did."

Now I feels onsuntain;
Won't you raise de cu'tain
Ovah all de ti'ngs dat 's hid?
W'y dat feathahed p'isen
Goes erbout a-visin'
Whippin' Will w'en Katy
did?

'LONG TO'DS NIGHT

DAIH 's a moughty soothin'
feelin'
Hits a dahky man,
'Long to'ds night.
W'en de row is mos' nigh ended,
Den he stops to fan,
'Long to'ds night.
De blue smoke f'om his cabin
is a-callin' to him
"Come;"
He smell de bacon cookin', an' he
hyeah de fiah hum;

An' he 'mence to sing, 'dough
wo'kin' putty nigh
done made him dumb,
'Long to'ds night.

Wid his hoe erpon his shouldah
Den he goes erlong,
'Long to'ds night.
An' he keepin' time a-steppin'
Wid a little song,
'Long to'ds night.
De restin'-time 's a-comin', an' de
time to drink an' eat;
A baby's toddlin' to'ds him on hits
little dusty feet,
An' a-goin' to'ds his cabin, an'
his suppah 's moughty
sweet,
'Long to'ds night.

Daih his Ca'line min' de kettle,
Rufus min' de chile,
'Long to'ds night;
An' de sweat roll down his
forred,
Mixin' wid his smile,
'Long to'ds night.
He toss his piccaninny, an' he hum
a little chune;
De wokin' all is ovah, an' de sup-
pah comin' soon;
De wo'kin' time 's Decembah, but
de restin' time is
June,
'Long to'ds night.

Dey 's a kin' o' doleful feelin',
Hits a tendah place,
'Long to'ds night;

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

Dey's a moughty glory in him
Shinin' thoo his face,
Long to'ds night.
De cabin's lak de big house, an'
de fiah's lak de sun;
His wife look moughty lakly, an'
de chile de puttiest
one;
W'y, hit's blessid, jes' a-livin'
w'en a body's wo'k is
done.
'Long to'ds night.

A GRIEVANCE

W'EN de snow's a-fallin'
An' de win' is col'.
Mammy 'mence a-callin',
Den she 'mence to scol',
"Lucius Lishy Brackett,
Don't you go out do's,
Button up yo' jacket,
Les'n you'll git froze."

I sit at de windah
Lookin' at de groun',
Nuffin nigh to hindah,
Mammy ain' erroun';
Wish 't she would n' mek me
Set down in dis chaih;
Pshaw, it would n't tek me
Long to git some aih.

So I jump down nimble
Ez a boy kin be,
Dough I's all a-trimble
Feahed some one'll see;
Bet in a half a minute
I fly out de do'

An' I's knee-deep in it,
Dat dah blessed snow.

Den I hyeah a pattah
Come acrost de flo'.
Den dey comes a clattah
At de cabin do';
An' my mammy holler
Spoilin' all my joy,
"Come in' f'om dat waller,
Don't I see you, boy?"

W'en de snow's a-sievin'
Down ez sof' ez meal,
Whut's de use o' livin'
'Cept you got de feel
Of de stuff dat's fallin'
'Roun' an' white an' damp,
'Dout some one a-callin',
"Come in hyeah, you scamp!"

DINAH KNEADING DOUGH

I HAVE seen full many a sight
Born of day or drawn by night:
Sunlight on a silver stream,
Golden lilies all a-dream,
Lofty mountains, bold and proud,
Veiled beneath the lacelike cloud;
But no lovely sight I know
Equals Dinah kneading dough.

Brown arms buried elbow-deep
Their domestic rhythm keep,
As with steady sweep they go
Through the gently yielding
dough.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Maids may vaunt their finer
 charms—
Naught to me like Dinah's arms;
Girls may draw, or paint, or
 sew —
I love Dinah kneading dough.

Eyes of jet and teeth of pearl,
Hair, some say, too tight a-curl;
But the dainty maid I deem
Very near perfection's dream.
Swift she works, and only flings
Me a glance — the least of things.
And I wonder, does she know
That my heart is in the dough?

TO A CAPTIOUS CRITIC

DEAR critic, who my lightness so
 deplores,
Would I might study to be prince
 of bores,
Right wisely would I rule that
 dull estate —
But, sir, I may not, till you
 abdicate.

DAT OL' MARE O' MINE

WANT to trade me, do you, mis-
 tah? Oh, well, now, I
 reckon not,
W'y you could n't buy my Sukey
 fu' a thousan' on de spot.
Dat ol' mare o' mine?

Yes, huh coat ah long an' shaggy,
 an' she ain't no shakes to
 see;

Dat's a ring-bone, yes, you right,
 suh, an' she got a on'ry
 knee,

But dey ain't no use in talkin',
 she de only hoss fu' me,
Dat ol' mare o' mine.

Co'se, I knows dat Suke's con-
 tra'y, an' she moughty ap'
 to vex;

But you got to mek erlowance fu'
 de nature of huh sex;
Dat ol' mare o' mine.

Ef you pull her on de lef' han';
 she plum 'termined to go
 right,

A cannon could n't skeer huh, but
 she boun' to tek a fright

At a piece o' common paper, or
 any'ting whut's white,
Dat ol' mare o' mine.

W'en my eyes commence to fail
 me, dough, I trus'es to
 huh sight,

An' she'll tote me safe an' hones'
 on de ve'y da'kes' night,
Dat ol' mare o' mine.

Ef I whup huh, she jes' switch
 huh tail, an' settle to a
 walk,

Ef I whup huh mo', she shek huh
 haid, an' lak ez not, she
 balk.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

But huh sense ain't no ways
lackin', she do evah t'ing
but talk,
Dat ol' mare o' mine.

But she gentle ez a lady w'en she
know huh beau kin see.

An' she sholy got mo' gumption
any day den you or me,
Dat ol' mare o' mine.

She's a leetle slow a-goin', an' she
moughty ha'd to sta't,
But we's gittin' ol' togethah, an'
she's closah to my hea't,
An' I does n't reckon, mistah, dat
she'd sca'cely keér to pa't;
Dat ol' mare o' mine.

W'y I knows de time dat cidah's
kin' o' muddled up my haid,
Ef it had n't been fu' Sukey
hyeah, I reckon I'd been
daid;
Dat ol' mare o' mine.

But she got me in de middle o'
de road an' tuk me
home,

An' she would n't let me wandah,
ner she would n't let me
roam,

Dat's de kin' o' hoss to tie to
w'en you's seed de cidah's
foam,
Dat ol' mare o' mine.

You kin talk erbout yo' heaven,
you kin talk erbout yo' hell,

Dey is people, dey is hosses, den
dey's cattle, den dey's—
well—

Dat ol' mare o' mine;
She de beatenes' t'ing dat evah
struck de medders o' de
town,

An' aldough huh haid ain't fittin'
fu' to waih no golden
crown.

D' ain't a blessed way, fu' Petah
fu' to tu'n my Sukey down,
Dat ol' mare o' mine.

IN THE MORNING

'Lias! 'Lias! Bless de Lawd!
Don' you know de day's
erbroad?

Ef you don' git up, you scamp,
Dey'll be trouble in dis camp.
T'ink I gwine to let you sleep
W'ile I meks yo' boa'd an' keep?
Dat's a putty howdy-do—
Don' you hyeah me, 'Lias—you?

Bet ef I come crost dis flo'
You won' fin' no time to sno'.
Daylight all a-shinin' in
W'ile you sleep—w'y hit's a sin!
Ain't de can'le-light enough
To bu'n out widout a snuff,
But you go de mo'nin' thoo
Bu'nin' up de daylight too?

'Lias, don' you hyeah me call?
No use tu'nin' to'ds de wall;

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

I kin hyeah dat mattuss squeak;
Don' you hyeah me w'en I speak?
Dis hyeah clock done struck off
six —

Ca'line, bring me dem ah sticks!
Oh, you down, suh; huh, you
down —

Look hyeah, don' you daih to
frown.

Ma'ch yo'se'f an' wash yo' face,
Don' you splattah all de place;
I got somep'n else to do,
'Sides jes' cleanin' aftah you.
Tek dat comb an' fix yo' haid —
Looks jes' lak a feddah baid.
Look hyeah, boy, I let you see
You sha' n't roll yo' eyes at me.

Come hyeah; bring me dat ah
strap!

Boy, I'll whup you 'twell you
drap;

You done felt yo'se'f too strong,
An' you sholy got me wrong.
Set down at dat table thaih;
Jes' you whimpah ef you daih!
Evah mo'nin' on dis place,
Seem lak I mus' lose my grace.

Fol' yo' han's an' bow yo' haid —
Wait ontwell de blessin' 's said;
"Lawd, have mussy on ouah
souls —"

(Don' you daih to tech dem
rolls —)

"Bless de food we gwine to
eat —"

(You set still — I *see* yo' feet;
You jes' try dat trick agin!)
"Gin us peace an' joy. Amen!"

THE POET

HE sang of life, serenely sweet,
With, now and then, a deeper
note.

From some high peak, nigh yet
remote,
He voiced the world's absorbing
beat.

He sang of love when earth was
young,
And Love, itself, was in his
lays.
But ah, the world, it turned to
praise
A jingle in a broken tongue.

A FLORIDA NIGHT

WIN' a-blowin' gentle so de san'
lay low,
San' a little heavy f'om de rain,
All de pa'ms a-wavin' an' a-weav-
in' slow,
Sighin' lak a sinnah-soul in
pain.
Alligator grinnin' by de ol'
lagoon,
Mockin'-bird a-singin' to be big
full moon,

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

'Skeeter go 'a-skimmin' to his
fightin' chune
(Lizy Ann's 'a-waitin' in de
lane!).

Moccasin a-sleepin' in de cyprus
swamp;
Need n't wake de gent'man, not
fu' me.

Mule, you need n't wake him
w'en you switch an' stomp,
Fightin' off a 'skeeter er a flea.
Florida is lovely, she's de fines'
lan'

Evah seed de sunlight f'om de
Mastah's han',
'Ceptin' fu' de varmints an' huh
fleas an' san'
An' de nights w'en Lizy Ann
ain' free.

Moon's a-kinder shaddered on de
melon patch;
No one ain't a-watchin' ez I
go.

Climbin' of de fence so's not to
click de latch
Meks my gittin' in a little
slow.

Watermelon smilin' as it say,
"I's free;"

Alligator boomin', but I let him
be,

Florida, oh, Florida's de lan' fu'
me —

(Lizy Ann a-singin' sweet an'
low).

DIFFERENCES

My neighbor lives on the hill,
And I in the valley dwell,
My neighbor must look down on
me,
Must I look up? — ah, well,
My neighbor lives on the hill,
And I in the valley dwell.

My neighbor reads, and prays,
And I — I laugh, God wot,
And sing like a bird when the
grass is green
In my small garden plot;
But ah, he reads and prays,
And I — I laugh, God wot.

His face is a book of woe,
And mine is a song of glee;
A slave he is to the great "They
say,"

But I — I am bold and free;
No wonder he smacks of woe,
And I have the tang of glee.

My neighbor thinks me a fool,
"The same to yourself," say I;
"Why take your books and take
your prayers,

Give me the open sky;"
My neighbor thinks me a fool,
"The same to yourself," say I.

LONG AGO

DE ol' time's gone, de new
time's hyeah
Wid all hits fuss an' feddahs;

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

I done fu'got de joy an' cheah
We knowed all kin's o' wed-
dahs,

I done fu'got each ol'-time hymn
We ust to sing in meetin';
I's leahned de prah's, so neat an'
trim,
De preachah keeps us 'peatin'.

Hang a vine by de chimney side,
An' one by de cabin do';
An' sing a song fu' de day dat
died,
De day of long ergo.

My youf, hit's gone, yes, long
ergo,
An' yit I ain't a-moanin';
Hit's fu' somet'ings I ust to
know

I set to-night a-honin'.
De pallet on de ol' plank flo',
De rain bar'l und' de eaves,
De live oak 'fo' de cabin do',
Whaih de night dove comes an'
grieves.

Hang a vine by de chimney side,
An' one by de cabin do';
An' sing a song fu' de day dat
died,
De day of long ergo.

I'd lak a few ol' frien's to-night
To come an' set wid me;
An' let me feel dat ol' delight
I ust to in dey glee.
But hyeah we is, my pipe an' me,
Wid no one else erbout;

We bofe is choked ez choked kin
be,
An' bofe 'll soon go out.

Hang a vine by de chimney side,
An' one by de cabin do';
An' sing a song fu' de day dat
died,
De day of long ergo.

A PLANTATION MELODY

DE trees is bendin' in de sto'm,
De rain done hid de mountain's
fo'm,

I's 'lone an' in distress.
But listen, dah's a voice I hyeah,
A-sayin' to me, loud an' cleah,
"Lay low in de wildaness."

De lightnin' flash, de bough sway
low,

My po' sick hea't is trimblin' so,
It hu'ts my very breas'.
But him dat give de lightnin'
powah

Jes' bids me in de tryin' howah
"Lay low in de wildaness."

O brothah, w'en de tempes' beat,
An' w'en yo' weary head an' feet
Can't fin' no place to res',
Jes' 'membah dat de Mastah's
nigh,
An' putty soon you'll hyeah de
cry,

"Lay low in de wildaness."

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

O sistah, w'en de rain come down,
An' all yo' hopes is 'bout to
drown,

Don't trus' de Mastah less.
He smilin' w'en you t'ink he
frown,
He ain' gwine let yo' soul sink
down —

Lay low in de wildaness.

A SPIRITUAL

DE 'cession 's stahted on de gospel
way,

De Captin' is a-drawin' nigh:
Bettah stop a-foolin' an' a-try to
pray;

Lif' up yo' haid w'en de King
go by!

Oh, sannah mou'nin' in de dusty
road,

Hyeah 's de minute fu' to dry
yo' eye:

Dey 's a mighty One a-comin'
fu' to baih yo' load;

Lif' up yo' haid w'en de King
go by!

Oh, widder weepin' by yo' hus-
ban's grave,

Hit 's bettah fu' to sing den
sigh:

Hyeah come de Mastah wid de
powah to save;

Lif' up yo' haid w'en de King
go by!

Oh, orphans a-weepin' lak de wid-
der do,

An' I wish you'd tell me why:
De Mastah is a mammy an' a
pappy too;

Lif' up yo' haid w'en de King
go by!

Oh, Moses sot de sarpint in de
wildahness

W'en de chillun had com-
menced to die:

Some 'efused to look, but hit
cuohed de res';

Lif' up yo' haid w'en de King
go by!

Bow down, bow 'way down,
Bow down,

But lif' up yo' haid w'en de King
go by!

THE MEMORY OF MARTHA

OUT in de night a sad bird moans,
An', oh, but hit 's mighty
lonely;

Times I kin sing, but mos' I
groans,

Fu' oh, but hit 's mighty
lonely!

Is you sleepin' well dis evenin',
Marfy, deah?

W'en I calls you f'om de cabin,
kin you hyeah?

'T ain't de same ol' place to me,
Nuffin' 's lak hit used to be,

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

W'en I knowed dat you was allus
some'ers near.

Down by de road de shadders
grows,

An', oh, but hit's mighty
lonely;

Seem lak de ve'y moonlight
knows,

An', oh, but hit's mighty
lonely!

Does you know, I's cryin' fu' you,
oh, my wife?

Does you know dey ain't no joy
no mo' in life?

An' my only t'ought is dis,

Dat I's honin' fu' de bliss

Fu' to quit dis groun' o' worri-
ment an' strife.

Dah on de baid my banjo lays,

An', oh, but hit's mighty
lonely;

Can't even sta't a chune o' praise,

An', oh, but hit's mighty
lonely!

Oh, hit's mighty slow a-waitin'
hyeah below.

Is you watchin' fu' me, Marfy,
at de do'?

Ef you is, in spite o' sin,

Dey'll be sho' to let me in,

W'en dey sees yo' face a-shinin',
den dey'll know.

W'EN I GITS HOME

It's mighty tiahsome layin'
'roun'

Dis sorrer-laden earfly groun',

An' oftentimes I thinks, thinks
I,

'T would be a sweet t'ing des to
die,

An' go 'long home.

Home whaih de frien's I loved 'll
say,

"We've waited fu' you many a
day,

Come hyeah an' res' yo'se'f, an'
know

You's done wid sorrer an' wid
woe,

Now you's at home."

W'en I gits home some blessid
day,

I 'lows to th'ow my caihs erway,

An' up an' down de shinin' street,

Go singin' sof' an' low an' sweet,

W'en I gits home.

I wish de day was neah at han',

I's tiahed of dis grievin' lan',

I's tiahed of de lonely yeahs.

I want to des dry up my teahs,

An' go 'long home.

Oh, Mastah, won't you sen' de
call?

My frien's is daih, my hope, my
all.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

I's waitin' whaih de road is rough,
I want to hyeah you say,

“Enough,
Ol' man, come home!”

“HOWDY, HONEY,
HOWDY!”

Do' a-stan'in' on a jar, fiah
a-shinin' thoo,

Ol' folks drowsin' 'roun' de place,
wide awake is Lou,

W'en I tap, she answeh, an' I see
huh 'mence to grin,

“Howdy, honey, howdy, won't
you step right in?”

Den I step erpon de log layin' at
de do',

Bless de Lawd, huh mammy an'
huh pap's done 'menced to
sno',

Now's de time, ef evah, ef I's
gwine to try an' win,

“Howdy, honey, howdy, won't
you step right in?”

No use playin' on de aidge,
trimblin' on de brink,

W'en a body love a gal, tell huh
whut he t'ink;

W'en huh hea't is open fu' de love
you gwine to gin,

Pull yo'se'f togethah, suh, an' step
right in.

Sweetes' imbitation dat a body
evah hyeahed,

Sweetah den de music of a love-
sick mockin'-bird,

Comin' f'om de gal you loves bet-
tah den yo' kin,

“Howdy, honey, howdy, won't
you step right in?”

At de gate o' heaven w'en de
storm o' life is pas',

'Spec' I'll be a-stan'in', 'twell de
Mastah say at las',

“Hyeah he stan' all weary, but
he wonned his fight wid sin.

Howdy, honey, howdy, won't you
step right in?”

THE UNSUNG HEROES

A SONG for the unsung heroes
who rose in the country's
need,

When the life of the land was
threatened by the slaver's
cruel greed,

For the men who came from the
cornfield, who came from the
plough and the flail,

Who rallied round when they
heard the sound of the
mighty man of the rail.

They laid them down in the val-
leys, they laid them down in
the wood,

And the world looked on at the
work they did, and whis-
pered, “It is good.”

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

They fought their way on the
hillside, they fought their
way in the glen,
And God looked down on their
sinews brown, and said, "I
have made them men."

They went to the blue lines gladly,
and the blue lines took them
in,

And the men who saw their
muskets' fire thought not of
their dusky skin.

The gray lines rose and melted
beneath their scathing show-
ers,

And they said, "'T is true, they
have force to do, these old
slave boys of ours."

Ah, Wagner saw their glory, and
Pillow knew their blood,

That poured on a nation's altar,
a sacrificial flood.

Port Hudson heard their war-cry
that smote its smoke-filled
air,

And the old free fires of their
savage sires again were
kindled there.

They laid them down where the
rivers the greening valleys
gem.

And the song of the thund'rous
cannon was their sole re-
quiem,

And the great smoke wreath that
mingled its hue with the
dusky cloud,

Was the flag that furled o'er a
saddened world, and the
sheet that made their shroud.

Oh, Mighty God of the Battles
Who held them in Thy
hand,

Who gave them strength through
the whole day's length, to
fight for their native land,

They are lying dead on the hill-
sides, they are lying dead on
the plain,

And we have not fire to smite the
lyre and sing them one brief
strain.

Give, Thou, some seer the power
to sing them in their might,

The men who feared the master's
whip, but did not fear the
fight;

That he may tell of their virtues
as minstrels did of old,

Till the pride of face and the hate
of race grow obsolete and
cold.

A song for the unsung heroes who
stood the awful test,

When the humblest host that the
land could boast went forth
to meet the best;

A song for the unsung heroes who
fell on the bloody sod,

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

Who fought their way from night
to day and struggled up to
God.

THE POOL

By the pool that I see in my
dreams, dear love,

I have sat with you time and
again;

And listened beneath the dank
leaves, dear love,

To the sibilant sound of the
rain.

And the pool, it is silvery bright,
dear love,

And as pure as the heart of a
maid,

As sparkling and dimpling, it
darkles and shines

In the depths of the heart of
the glade.

But, oh, I've a wish in my soul,
dear love,

(The wish of a dreamer, it
seems,)

That I might wash free of my
sins, dear love,

In the pool that I see in my
dreams.

POSSESSION

WHOSE little lady is you, chile,
Whose little gal is you?

What's de use o' kiver'n up yo'
face?

Chile, dat ain't de way to do.

Lemme see yo' little eyes,

Tek yo' little han's down nice,

Lawd, you wuff a million bills,

Huh uh, chile, dat ain't yo'
price.

Honey, de money ain't been made

Dat dey could pay fu' you;

'Tain't no use a-biddin'; you too
high

Fu' de riches' Jap er Jew.

Lemme see you smilin' now,

How dem teef o' yo'n do
shine,

An' de t'ing dat meks me laff

Is dat all o' you is mine.

How's I gwine to tell you how I
feel,

How's I gwine to weigh yo'
wuff?

Oh, you sholy is de sweetes' t'ing
Walkin' on dis blessed earf.

Possum is de sweetes' meat,

Cidah is the nices' drink,

But my little lady-bird

Is de bes' of all, I t'ink.

Talk erbout 'uligion he'pin' folks

All thoo de way o' life,

Gin de res' 'uligion, des' gin me

You, my little lady-wife.

Den de days kin come all ha'd,

Den de nights kin come all
black,

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Des' you tek me by de han',
An' I 'll stumble on de track.

Stumble on de way to Gawd, my
chile,

Stumble on, an' mebbe fall;
But I 'll keep a-trottin', while you
lead on,

Pickin' an' a-trottin', dat 's all.
Hol' me mighty tight, dough,
chile,

Fu' hit 's rough an' rocky lan',
Heaben 's at de en', I know,
So I 's leanin' on yo' han'.

THE OLD FRONT GATE

W'EN daih 's chillun in de house,
Dey keep on a-gittin' tall;
But de folks don' seem to see
Dat dey 's growin' up at all,
'Twell dey fin' out some fine day
Dat de gals has 'menced to
grow,

W'en dey notice as dey pass
Dat de front gate 's saggin' low.

W'en de hinges creak an' cry,
An' de bahs go slantin' down,
You kin reckon dat hit 's time
Fu' to cas' yo' eye erroun',
'Cause daih ain't no 'sputin' dis,
Hit 's de trues' sign to show
Dat daih 's cou'tin' goin' on
W'en de ol' front gate sags low.

Oh, you grumble an' complain,
An' you prop dat gate up right;

But you notice right nex' day
Dat hit 's in de same ol' plight.
So you fin' dat hit 's a rule,
An' daih ain' no use to blow,
W'en de gals is growin' up,
Dat de front gate will sag low.

Den you t'ink o' yo' young days,
W'en you cou'ted Sally Jane,
An' you so't o' feel ashamed
Fu' to grumble an' complain,
'Cause yo' ricerlection says,
An' you know hits wo'ds is so,
Dat huh pappy had a time
Wid his front gate saggin' low.

So you jes' looks on an' smiles
At 'em leanin' on de gate,
Tryin' to t'ink whut he kin say
Fu' to keep him daih so late,
But you lets dat gate erlone,
Fu' yo' 'sperunce goes to show,
'Twell de gals is ma'ied off,
It gwine keep on saggin' low.

DIRGE FOR A SOLDIER

IN the east the morning comes,
Hear the rollin' of the drums
On the hill.
But the heart that beat as they
beat
In the battle's raging day heat
Lieth still.
Unto him the night has come,
Though they roll the morning
drum.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

What is in the bugle's blast?

It is: "Victory at last!

Now for rest."

But, my comrades, come behold
him,

Where our colors now enfold him,

And his breast

Bares no more to meet the blade,

But lies covered in the shade.

What a stir there is to-day!

They are laying him away

Where he fell.

There the flag goes draped before
him;

Now they pile the grave sod o'er
him

With a knell.

And he answers to his name

In the higher ranks of fame.

There's a woman left to mourn

For the child that she has borne

In travail.

But her heart beats high and
higher,

With the patriot mother's fire,

At the tale.

She has borne and lost a son,

But her work and his are done.

Fling the flag out, let it wave;

They're returning from the
grave —

"Double quick!"

And the cymbals now are crash-
ing,

Bright his comrades' eyes are flash-
ing

From the thick

Battle-ranks which knew him
brave,

No tears for a hero's grave.

In the east the morning comes,

Hear the rattle of the drums

Far away.

Now no time for grief's pursuing,

Other work is for the doing,

Here to-day.

He is sleeping, let him rest

With the flag across his breast.

A FROLIC

SWING yo' lady roun' an' roun',

Do de bes' you know;

Mek yo' bow an' p'omenade

Up an' down de flo';

Mek dat banjo hump huhse'f,

Listen at huh talk:

Mastah gone to town to-night;

'T ain't no time to walk.

Lif' yo' feet an' flutter thoo,

Run, Miss Lucy, run;

Reckon you'll be cotched an'
kissed

'Fo' de night is done.

You don't need to be so proud —

I's a-watchin' you,

An' I's layin' lots o' plans

Fu' to git you, too.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Moonlight on de cotton-fiel'
Shinin' sof' an' white,
Whippo'will a-tellin' tales
Out thaih in de night;
An' yo' cabin 's 'crost de lot:
Run, Miss Lucy, run;
Reckon you'll be cotched an'
kissed
'Fo' de night is done.

NODDIN' BY DE FIRE

SOME folks t'inks hit 's right an'
p'opah,
Soon ez bedtime come erroun',
Fu' to scramble to de kiver,
Lak dey 'd hyeahed de trumpet
soun'.
But dese people dey all misses
Whut I mos'ly does desiah;
Dat 's de settin' roun' an' dozin',
An' a-noddin' by de fiah.

When you 's tiahed out a-hoein',
Er a-followin' de plough,
Whut 's de use of des a-fallin'
On yo' pallet lak a cow?
W'y, de fun is all in waitin'
In de face of all de tiah,
An' a-dozin' and a-drowsin'
By a good ol' hick'ry fiah.

Oh, you grunts an' groans an'
mumbles
Case yo' bones is full o' col',

Dough you feels de joy a-tricklin'
Roun' de co'nahs of yo' soul.
An' you 'low anothah minute
'S sho to git you, wa'm an'
dryah,
W'en you set up pas' yo' bedtime,
Case you hates to leave de fiah.

Whut 's de use o' downright
sleepin'?

You can't feel it while it las',
An' you git up feelin' sorry
W'en de time fu' it is pas'.
Seem to me dat time too precious,
An' de houahs too short entiah,
Fu' to sleep, w'en you could spen'
'em
Des a-noddin' by de fiah.

LOVE'S CASTLE

KEY and bar, key and bar,
Iron bolt and chain!
And what will you do when the
King comes
To enter his domain?

Turn key and lift bar,
Loose, oh, bolt and chain!
Open the door and let him in,
And then lock up again.

But, oh, heart, and woe, heart,
Why do you ache so sore?
Never a moment's peace have you
Since Love hath passed the door.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

Turn key and lift bar,
And loose bolt and chain;
But Love took in his esquire, Grief,
And there they both remain.

MORNING SONG OF LOVE

DARLING, my darling, my heart is
on the wing,
It flies to thee this morning like
a bird,
Like happy birds in springtime my
spirits soar and sing,
The same sweet song thine ears
have often heard.

The sun is in my window, the
shadow on the lea,
The wind is moving in the
branches green,
And all my life, my darling, is
turning unto thee,
And kneeling at thy feet, my
own, my queen.

The golden bells are ringing across
the distant hill,
Their merry peals come to me
soft and clear,
But in my heart's deep chapel all
incense-filled and still
A sweeter bell is sounding for
thee, dear.

The bell of love invites thee to
come and seek the shrine

Whose altar is erected unto
thee,
The offerings, the sacrifice, the
prayers, the chants are
thine,
And I, my love, thy humble
priest will be.

ON A CLEAN BOOK

TO F. N.

LIKE sea-washed sand upon the
shore,
So fine and clean the tale,
So clear and bright I almost see,
The flashing of a sail.

The tang of salt is in its veins,
The freshness of the spray
God give you love and lore and
strength,
To give us such alway.

TO THE EASTERN SHORE

I's feelin' kin' o' lonesome in my
little room to-night,
An' my min's done los' de min-
utes an' de miles,
W'ile it teks me back a-flyin' to
de country of delight,
Whaih de Chesapeake goes
grumblin' er wid smiles.
Oh, de ol' plantation's callin'
to me, Come, come back,

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Hyeah 's de place fu' you to la-
boun an' to res',

'Fu my sandy roads is gleam-
in' w'ile de city ways is
black;

Come back, honey, case yo'
country home is bes'.

W'ile my little cabin beckons,
dough his mouf is closed
an' dumb,

I's a-comin, an' my hea't be-
gins to sing.

RELUCTANCE

I know de moon is shinin' down
erpon de Eastern sho',

An' de bay 's a-sayin' "How-
dy" to de lan';

An' de folks is all a-settin' out
erroun' de cabin do',

Wid dey feet a-restin' in de sil-
vah san';

An' de ol' plantation 's callin'
to me, Come, oh, come,

F'om de life dat 's des' a-waih-
in' you erway,

F'om de trouble an' de bustle,
an' de agernizin' hum

Dat de city keeps ergoin' all de
day.

WILL I have some mo' dat pie?
No, ma'am, thank-ee, dat is—
I—

Bettah quit daihin' me.
Dat ah pie look sutny good:
How 'd you feel now ef I would?
I don' reckon dat I should;
Bettah quit daihin' me.

Look hyeah, I gwine tell de truf,
Mine is sholy one sweet toof:

Bettah quit daihin' me.
Yass'm, yass'm, dat 's all right,
I 's done tried to be perlite:
But dat pie 's a lakly sight,
Wha 's de use o' daihin' me?

I 's tiahed of de city, tek me back
to Sandy Side,

Whaih de po'est ones kin live
an' play an' eat;

Whaih we draws a simple livin'
f'om de fo'est an' de tide,

An' de days ah faih, an' evah
night is sweet.

Fu' de ol' plantation 's callin'
to me, Come, oh, come.

An' de Chesapeake 's a-sayin'
"Dat 's de t'ing,"

My, yo' lips is full an' red,
Don't I wish you 'd tu'n yo' haid?
Bettah quit daihin' me.

Dat ain't faih, now, honey chile,
I 's gwine lose my sense erwhile
Ef you des set daih an' smile,
Bettah quit daihin' me.

Nuffin' don' look ha'f so fine
Ez dem teef, deah, w'en dey shine:
Bettah quit daihin' me.
Now look hyeah, I tells you dis;

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

I'll give up all othah bliss
Des to have one little kiss,
Bettah quit daihin' me.

Laws, I teks yo' little han',
Ain't it tendah? bless de lan'—
Bettah quit daihin' me.
I's so lonesome by myse'f,
'D ain't no fun in livin' lef';
Dis hyeah life's ez dull ez def:
Bettah quit daihin' me.

Why n't you tek yo' han' erway?
Yass, I'll hol' it: but I say
Bettah quit daihin' me.
Holin' han's is sholy fine.
Seems lak dat's de weddin' sign.
Wish you'd say dat you'd be
mine;—
Dah you been daihin' me.

BALLADE

By Mystic's banks I held my
dream.

(I held my fishing rod as well,)

The vision was of dace and bream,
A fruitless vision, sooth to tell.

But round about the sylvan dell
Were other sweet Arcadian
shrines,

Gone now, is all the rural spell,
Arcadia has trolley lines.

Oh, once loved, sluggish, darkling
stream,

For me no more, thy waters
swell,

Thy music now the engines'
scream,

Thy fragrance now the factory's
smell;

Too near for me the clanging
bell;

A false light in the water shines
While Solitude lists to her
knell,—

Arcadia has trolley lines.

Thy wooded lanes with shade and
gleam

Where bloomed the fragrant as-
phodel,

Now bleak commercially teem
With signs "To Let," "To
Buy," "To Sell."

And Commerce holds them
fierce and fell;

With vulgar sport she now com-
bines

Sweet Nature's piping voice to
quell.

Arcadia has trolley lines.

L'ENVOI.

Oh, awful Power whose works
repel

The marvel of the earth's de-
signs,—

I'll hie me elsewhere to dwell,
Arcadia has trolley lines.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

SPEAKIN' AT DE COU'T- HOUSE

DEY been speakin' at de cou't-
house,

An' laws-a-massy me,
'T was de beatness kin' o' doin's
Dat evah I did see.
Of cose I had to be dah
In de middle o' de crowd,
An' I hallohed wid de othahs,
W'en de speakah riz and bowed.

I was kind o' disapp'inted
At de smallness of de man,
Case I'd allus pictered great folks
On a mo' expansive plan;
But I t'ought I could respect him
An' tek in de wo'ds he said,
Fu' dey sho was somp'n knowin'
In de bald spot on his haid.

But hit did seem so't o' funny
Aftah waitin' fu' a week
Dat de people kep' on shoutin'
So de man des could n't speak;
De ho'ns dey blared a little,
Den dey let loose on de
drums,—

Some one tol' me dey was playin'
"See de conkerin' hero comes."

"Well," says I, "you all is white
folks,

But you's sutny actin' queer,
What's de use of heroes comin'
Ef dey cain't talk w'en dey's
here?"

Aftah while dey let him open,
An' dat man he waded in,
An' he fit de wahs all ovah
Winnin' victeries lak sin.

W'en he come down to de present,
Den he made de feathahs fly.
He des waded in on money,
An' he played de ta'iff high.
An' he said de colah question,
Hit was ovah, solved, an' done,
Dat de dahky was his brothah,
Evah blessed mothah's son.

Well he settled all de trouble
Dat's been pesterin' de lan',
Den he set down mid de cheerin'
An' de playin' of de ban'.
I was feelin' moughty happy
'Twell I hyeahed somebody
speak,
"Well, dat's his side of de bus'-
ness,
But you wait for Jones nex'
week."

BLACK SAMSON OF BRANDYWINE

"In the fight at Brandywine, Black
Samson, a giant negro armed with a
scythe, sweeps his way through the
red ranks. . . ." C. M. SKINNER'S
*"Myths and Legends of Our Own
Land."*

GRAY are the pages of record,
Dim are the volumes of eld;
Else had old Delaware told us
More that her history held.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

Told us with pride in the story,
Honest and noble and fine,
More of the tale of my hero,
Black Samson of Brandywine.

Sing of your chiefs and your nobles,
Saxon and Celt and Gaul,
Breath of mine ever shall join you,
Highly I honor them all.
Give to them all of their glory,
But for this noble of mine,
Lend him a tithe of your tribute,
Black Samson of Brandywine.

There in the heat of the battle,
There in the stir of the fight,
Loomed he, an ebony giant,
Black as the pinions of night.
Swinging his scythe like a mower
Over a field of grain,
Needless the care of the gleaners,
Where he had passed amain.

Straight through the human harvest,
Cutting a bloody swath,
Woe to you, soldier of Briton!
Death is abroad in his path.
Flee from the scythe of the reaper,
Flee while the moment is thine,
None may with safety withstand him,
Black Samson of Brandywine.

Was he a freeman or bondman?
Was he a man or a thing?

What does it matter? His bravery
Renders him royal — a king.
If he was only a chattel,
Honor the ransom may pay
Of the royal, the loyal black giant
Who fought for his country
that day.

Noble and bright is the story,
Worthy the touch of the lyre,
Sculptor or poet should find it
Full of the stuff to inspire.
Beat it in brass and in copper,
Tell it in storied line,
So that the world may remember
Black Samson of Brandywine.

THE LOOKING-GLASS

DINAH stan' befo' de glass,
Lookin' mighty neat,
An' huh purty shadder sass
At huh haid an' feet.
While she sasshay 'roun' an' bow,
Smilin' den an' poutin' now,
An' de lookin'-glass, I 'low
Say: "Now, ain't she sweet?"

All she do, de glass it see,
Hit des see, no mo',
Seems to me, hit ought to be
Drappin' on de flo'.
She go w'en huh time git slack,
Kissin' han's an' smilin' back,
Lawsy, how my lips go smack,
Watchin' at de do'.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Wisht I was huh lookin'-glass,
W'en she kissed huh han';
Does you t'ink I 'd let it pass,
Settin' on de stan'?
No; I'd des' fall down an' break,
Kin' o' glad 't uz fu' huh sake;
But de diffunce, dat whut make
Lookin'-glass an' man.

A MISTY DAY

HEART of my heart, the day is
chill,
The mist hangs low o'er the
wooded hill,
The soft white mist and the heavy
cloud
The sun and the face of heaven
shroud.
The birds are thick in the dripping
trees,
That drop their pearls to the beg-
gar breeze;
No songs a're rife where songs are
wont,
Each singer crouches in his haunt.

Heart of my heart, the day is chill,
Whene'er thy loving voice is still,
The cloud and mist hide the sky
from me,
Whene'er thy face I cannot see.
My thoughts fly back from the
chill without,
My mind in the storm drops
doubt on doubt,

No songs arise. Without thee,
love,
My soul sinks down like a fright-
ened dove.

Li'l' GAL

OH, de weathah it is balmy an' de
breeze is sighin' low.

Li'l' gal,

An' de mockin' bird is singin' in
de locus' by de do',

Li'l' gal;

Dere's a hummin' an' a bummin'
in de lan' f'om eas' to wes',

I's a-sighin' fu' you, honey, an' I
nevah know no res'.

Fu' dey's lots o' trouble brewin'
an' a-stewin' in my breas',

Li'l' gal.

Whut's de mattah wid de weathah,
whut's de mattah wid de
breeze,

Li'l' gal?

Whut's de mattah wid de locus'
dat's a-singin' in de trees,

Li'l' gal?

W'y dey knows dey ladies love 'em,
an' dey knows dey love 'em
true,

An' dey love 'em back, I reckon,
des' lak I's a-lovin' you;

Dat's de reason dey's a-weavin'
an' a-sighin', thoo an' thoo,

Li'l' gal.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

Don't you let no' da'ky fool you
'cause de clo'es he waihs is
fine,

Li'l' gal.

Dey 's a hones' hea't a-beatin' un-
nerneaf dese rags o' mine,

Li'l' gal.

C'ose dey ain' no use in mockin'
whut de birds an' weathah do,

But I 's so'y I cain't 'spress it w'en
I knows I loves you true,

Dat 's de reason I 's a-sighin' an'
a-singin now fu' you,

Li'l' gal. •

DOUGLASS

AH, Douglass, we have fall'n on
evil days,

Such days as thou, not even thou
didst know,

When thee, the eyes of that
harsh long ago

Saw, salient, at the cross of devious
ways,

And all the country heard thee
with amaze.

Not ended then, the passionate
ebb and flow,

The awful tide that battled to
and fro;

We ride amid a tempest of dis-
praise.

Now, when the waves of swift dis-
sension swarm,

And Honor, the strong pilot,
lieth stark,

Oh, for thy voice high-sounding
o'er the storm,

For thy strong arm to guide the
shivering bark,

The blast-defying power of thy
form,

To give us comfort through the
lonely dark.

WHEN SAM'L SINGS

HYEAH dat singin' in de medders
Whaih de folks is mekin' hay?

Wo'k is pretty middlin' heavy
Fu' a man to be so gay.

You kin tell dey 's somep'n special
F'om de canter o' de song;

Somep'n sholy pleasin' Sam'l,
W'en he singin' all day long.

Hyeahd him wa'blin' 'way dis
mo'nin'

'Fo' 't was light enough to see.
Seem lak music in de evenin'

Allus good enough fu' me.
But dat man commenced to hollah

'Fo' he 'd even washed his face;
Would you b'lieve, de scan'lous

rascal

Woke de birds erroun' de place?

Sam'l took a trip a-Sad'day;

Dressed hisse'f in all he had,

Tuk a cane an' went a-strollin',

Lookin' mighty pleased an' glad.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Some folks don' know whut de
mattah,

But I do, you bet yo' life;
Sam'l smilin' an' a-singin'
'Case he been to see his wife.

She live on de fu' plantation,
Twenty miles erway er so;
But huh man is mighty happy
W'en he git de chanst to go.
Walkin' allus ain' de nices'—
Mo'nin' fin's him on de way—
But he allus comes back smilin',
Lak his pleasure was his pay.

Den he do a heap o' talkin',
Do' he mos'ly kin' o' still,
But de wo'ds, dey gits to runnin'
Lak de watah fu' a mill.
"Whut 's de use o' havin' trouble,
Whut 's de use o' havin' strife?"
Dat 's de way dis Sam'l preaches
W'en he been to see his wife.

An' I reckon I git jealous,
Fu' I laff an' joke an' sco'n,
An' I say, "Oh, go on, Sam'l,
Des go on, an' blow yo' ho'n."
But I know dis comin' Sad'day,
Dey 'll be brighter days in life;
An' I 'll be ez glad ez Sam'l
W'en I go to see my wife.

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

THE word is writ that he who
runs may read.

What is the passing breath of
earthly fame?

But to snatch glory from the hands
of blame—

That is to be, to live, to strive in-
deed.

A poor Virginia cabin gave the
seed,

And from its dark and lowly door
there came

A peer of princes in the world's
acclaim,

A master spirit for the nation's
need.

Strong, silent, purposeful beyond
his kind,

The mark of rugged force on
brow and lip,

Straight on he goes, nor turns to
look behind

Where hot the hounds come
baying at his hip;

With one idea foremost in his
mind,

Like the keen prow of some on-
forging ship.

THE MONK'S WALK

IN this sombre garden close
What has come and passed, who
knows?

What red passion, what white
pain

Haunted this dim walk in vain?

Underneath the ivied wall,
Where the silent shadows fall,

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

Lies the pathway chill and damp
Where the world-quit dreamers
tramp.

Just across, where sunlight burns,
Smiling at the mourning ferns,
Stand the roses, side by side,
Nodding in their useless pride.

Ferns and roses, who shall say
What you witness day by day?
Covert smile or dropping eye,
As the monks go pacing by.

Has the novice come to-day
Here beneath the wall to pray?
Has the young monk, lately chid-
den,
Sung his lyric, sweet, forbidden?

Tell me, roses, did you note
That pale father's throbbing
throat?
Did you hear him murmur,
"Love!"
As he kissed a faded glove?

Mourning ferns, pray tell me why
Shook you with that passing sigh?
Is it that you chanced to spy
Something in the Abbot's eye?

Here no dream, nor thought of sin,
Where no worlding enters in;
Here no longing, no desire,
Heat nor flame of earthly fire.

Branches waving green above,
Whisper naught of life nor love;

Softened winds that seem a breath,
Perfumed, bring no fear of death.

Is it living thus to live?
Has life nothing more to give?
Ah, no more of smile or sigh —
Life, the world, and love, good-
bye.

Gray, and passionless, and dim,
Echoing of the solemn hymn,
Lies the walk, 'twixt fern and rose,
Here within the garden close.

LOVE-SONG

IF Death should claim me for her
own to-day,
And softly I should falter from
your side,
Oh, tell me, loved one, would my
memory stay,
And would my image in your
heart abide?
Or should I be as some forgotten
dream,
That lives its little space, then
fades entire?
Should Time send o'er you its
relentless stream,
To cool your heart, and quench
for aye love's fire?
I would not for the world, love,
give you pain,
Or ever compass what would
cause you grief;

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

And, oh, how well I know that
tears are vain!

But love is sweet, my dear, and
life is brief;

So if some day before you I should
go

Beyond the sound and sight of
song and sea,

'T would give my spirit stronger
wings to know

That you remembered still and
wept for me.

SLOW THROUGH THE DARK

SLOW moves the pageant of a
climbing race;

Their footsteps drag far, far be-
low the height,

And, unprevailing by their ut-
most might,

Seem faltering downward from
each hard won place.

No strange, swift-sprung excep-
tion we; we trace

A devious way thro' dim, uncer-
tain light,—

Our hope, through the long
vistaed years, a sight

Of that our Captain's soul sees
face to face.

Who, faithless, faltering that
the road is steep,

Now raiseth up his drear insistent
cry?

Who stoppeth here to spend a
while in sleep

Or curseth that the storm obscures
the sky?

Heed not the darkness round
you, dull and deep;

The clouds grow thickest when
the summit's nigh.

THE MURDERED LOVER

SAY a mass for my soul's repose,
my brother,

Say a mass for my soul's repose,
I need it,

Lovingly lived we, the sons of one
mother,

Mine was the sin, but I pray
you not heed it.

Dark were her eyes as the sloe and
they called me,

Called me with voice indepen-
dent of breath.

God! how my heart beat; her
beauty appalled me,

Dazed me, and drew to the sea-
brink of death.

Lithe was her form like a willow.
She beckoned,

What could I do save to follow
and follow,

Nothing of right or result could be
reckoned;

Life without her was unworthy
and hollow.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

Ay, but I wronged thee, my
brother, my brother;

Ah, but I loved her, thy beautiful wife.

Shade of our father, and soul of
our mother,

Have I not paid for my love
with my life?

Dark was the night when, revengeful, I met you,
Deep in the heart of a desolate
land.

Warm was the life-blood which
angrily wet you
Sharp was the knife that I felt
from your hand.

Wept you, oh, wept you, alone by
the river,

When my stark carcass you
secretly sank.

Ha, now I see that you tremble
and shiver;

'T was but my spirit that passed
when you shrank!

Weep not, oh, weep not, 't is over,
't is over;

Stir the dark weeds with the
turn of the tide;

Go, thou hast sent me forth, ever
a rover,

Rest and the sweet realm of
heaven denied.

Say a mass for my soul's repose,
my brother,

Say a mass for my soul, I need
it.

Sin of mine was it, and sin of no
other,

Mine was it all, but I pray you
not heed it.

PHILOSOPHY

I BEEN t'inkin' 'bout de preachah;
whut he said de othah
night,

'Bout hit bein' people's dooty,
fu' to keep dey faces bright;
How one ought to live so pleasant
dat ouah tempah never riles,
Meetin' evahbody roun' us wid
ouah very nicest smiles.

Dat's all right, I 'ain't a-sputin'
not a t'ing dat soun's lak
fac',

But you don't ketch folks a-grin-
nin' wid a misery in de
back;

An' you don't fin' dem a-smilin'
w'en dey's hongry ez kin
be,

Leastways, dat's how human
natur' allus seems to 'pear
to me.

We is mos' all putty likely fu' to
have our little cares,

An' I think we 'se doin' fus' rate
w'en we jes' go long and
bears,

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Widout breakin' up ouah faces in
a sickly so't o' grin,
W'en we knows dat in ouah in-
nards we is p'intly mad ez
sin.

Oh dey's times fu' bein' pleasant
an' fu' goin' smilin' roun',
'Cause I don't believe in people
allus totin' roun' a frown,
But it's easy 'nough to titter w'en
de stew is smokin' hot,
But hit's mighty ha'd to giggle
w'en dey's nuffin' in de
pot.

A PREFERENCE

MASTAH drink his ol' Made'a,
Missy drink huh sherry wine,
Ovahseah lak his whiskey,
But dat othah drink is mine,
Des' 'lasses an' watah, 'lasses
an' watah.

W'en you git a steamin' hoe-cake
On de table, go way, man!
'D ain' but one t'ing to go wid it,
'Sides de gravy in de pan,
Dat's 'lasses an' watah, 'lasses
an' watah.

W'en hit's 'possum dat you eatin',
'Simmon beer is moughty sweet;
But fu' evahday consumin'

'D ain't no mo'tal way to beat
Des' 'lasses an' watah, 'lasses
an' watah.

W'y de bees is allus busy,
An' ain' got no time to was'?
Hit's beca'se dey knows de honey
Dey's a makin', gwine to tas'
Lak 'lasses an' watah, 'lasses
an' watah.

Oh, hit's moughty mil' an'
soothin',
An' hit don' go to yo' haid;
Dat's de reason I's a-backin'
Up de othah wo'ds I said,
"Des' 'lasses an' watah, 'lasses
an' watah."

THE DEBT

THIS is the debt I pay
Just for one riotous day,
Years of regret and grief,
Sorrow without relief.

Pay it I will to the end —
Until the grave, my friend,
Gives me a true release —
Gives me the clasp of peace.

Slight was the thing I bought,
Small was the debt I thought,
Poor was the loan at best —
God! but the interest!

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

ON THE DEDICATION OF DOROTHY HALL

TUSKEGEE, ALA., APRIL 22, 1901.

NOT to the midnight of the gloomy
past,
Do we revert to-day; we look
upon
The golden present and the future
vast
Whose vistas show us visions of
the dawn.

Nor shall the sorrows of departed
years
The sweetness of our tranquil
souls annoy,
The sunshine of our hopes dispels
the tears,
And clears our eyes to see this
later joy.

Not ever in the years that God
hath given
Have we gone friendless down
the thorny way,
Always the clouds of pregnant
black were riven
By flashes from His own eternal
day.

The women of a race should be its
pride;
We glory in the strength our
mothers had,
We glory that this strength was
not denied

To labor bravely, nobly, and be
glad.

God give to these within this tem-
ple here,
Clear vision of the dignity of
toil,
That virtue in them may its blos-
soms rear
Unspotted, fragrant, from the
lowly soil.

God bless the givers for their noble
deed,
Shine on them with the mercy
of Thy face,
Who come with open hearts to
help and speed
The striving women of a strug-
gling race.

A ROADWAY

LET those who will stride on their
barren roads
And prick themselves to haste with
self-made goads,
Unheeding, as they struggle day
by day,
If flowers be sweet or skies be blue
or gray:
For me, the lone, cool way by purl-
ing brooks,
The solemn quiet of the woodland
nooks,
A song-bird somewhere trilling
sadly gay,

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

A pause to pick a flower beside the
way.

BY RUGGED WAYS

By rugged ways and thro' the
night

We struggle blindly toward the
light;

And groping, stumbling, ever pray
For sight of long delaying day.

The cruel thorns beside the road
Stretch eager points our steps to
goad,

And from the thickets all about
Detaining hands reach threatening
out.

"Deliver us, oh, Lord," we cry,
Our hands uplifted to the sky.

No answer save the thunder's peal,
And onward, onward, still we reel.

"Oh, give us now thy guiding
light;"

Our sole reply, the lightning's
blight.

"Vain, vain," cries one, "in vain
we call;"

But faith serene is over all.

Beside our way the streams are
dried,

And famine mates us side by side.

Discouraged and reproachful eyes
Seek once again the frowning skies.

Yet shall there come, spite storm
and shock,

A Moses who shall smite the rock,

Call manna from the Giver's hand,
And lead us to the promised land!

The way is dark and cold and
steep,

And shapes of horror murder sleep,
And hard the unrelenting years;

But 'twixt our sighs and moans
and tears,

We still can smile, we still can
sing,

Despite the arduous journeying.

For faith and hope their courage
lend,

And rest and light are at the end.

LOVE'S SEASONS

WHEN the bees are humming in
the honeysuckle vine

And the summer days are in
their bloom,

Then my love is deepest, oh,
dearest heart of mine,

When the bees are humming in the
honeysuckle vine.

When the winds are moaning o'er
the meadows chill and gray,

And the land is dim with winter
gloom,

Then for thee, my darling, love
will have its way,

When the winds are moaning o'er
the meadows chill and gray.

In the vernal dawning with the
starting of the leaf,

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

In the merry-chanting time of
spring,
Love steals all my senses, oh, the
happy-hearted thief!
In the vernal morning with the
starting of the leaf.

Always, ever always, even in the
autumn drear,
When the days are sighing out
their grief,
Thou art still my darling, dear-
est of the dear,
Always, ever always, even in the
autumn drear.

TO A DEAD FRIEND

It is as if a silver chord
Were suddenly grown mute,
And life's song with its rhythm
warred
Against a silver lute.

It is as if a silence fell
Where bides the garnered sheaf,
And voices murmuring, "It is
well,"
Are stifled by our grief.

It is as if the gloom of night
Had hid a summer's day,
And willows, sighing at their
plight,
Bent low beside the way.

For he was part of all the best
That Nature loves and gives,

And ever more on Memory's breast
He lies and laughs and lives.

TO THE SOUTH

ON ITS NEW SLAVERY

HEART of the Southland, heed me
pleading now,
Who bearest, unashamed, upon
my brow
The long kiss of the loving tropic
sun,
And yet, whose veins with thy red
current run.

Borne on the bitter winds from
every hand,
Strange tales are flying over all the
land,
And Condemnation, with his pin-
ions foul,
Glooms in the place where broods
the midnight owl.

What art thou, that the world
should point at thee,
And vaunt and chide the weakness
that they see?
There was a time they were not
wont to chide;
Where is thy old, uncompromis-
ing pride?

Blood-washed, thou shouldst lift
up thine honored head,
White with the sorrow for thy
loyal dead

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Who lie on every plain, on every
hill,

And whose high spirit walks the
Southland still: ~

Whose infancy our mother's hands
have nursed.

Thy manhood, gone to battle un-
accursed,

Our fathers left to till th' re-
luctant field,

To rape the soil for what she
would not yield;

Wooing for aye, the cold unam'-
rous sod,

Whose growth for them still
meant a master's rod;

Tearing her bosom for the wealth
that gave

The strength that made the toiler
still a slave.

Too long we hear the deep im-
passioned cry

That echoes vainly to the heedless
sky;

Too long, too long, the Mace-
donian call

Falls fainting far beyond the out-
ward wall,

Within whose sweep, beneath the
shadowing trees,

A slumbering nation takes its
dangerous ease;

Too long the rumors of thy hatred
go

For those who loved thee and thy
children so.

Thou must arise forthwith, and
strong, thou must

Throw off the smirching of this
baser dust,

Lay by the practice of this later
creed,

And be thine honest self again
indeed.

There was a time when even slav-
ery's chain

Held in some joys to alternate
with pain,

Some little light to give the night
relief,

Some little smiles to take the place
of grief.

There was a time when, jocund
as the day,

The toiler hoed his row and sung
his lay,

Found something gleeful in the
very air,

And solace for his toiling every-
where.

Now all is changed, within the
rude stockade,

A bondsman whom the greed of
men has made

Almost too brutish to deplore his
plight,

Toils hopeless on from joyless
morn till night.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

For him no more the cabin's quiet rest, The homely joys that gave to labor rest; No more for him the merry banjo's sound, Nor trip of lightsome dances foot- ing round.	Is it for this we all have felt the flame,— This newer bondage and this deeper shame? Nay, not for this, a nation's heroes bled, And North and South with tears beheld their dead.
For him no more the lamp shall glow at eve, Nor chubby children pluck him by the sleeve; No more for him the master's eyes be bright,— He has nor freedom's nor a slave's delight.	Oh, Mother South, hast thou for- got thy ways, Forgot the glory of thine ancient days, Forgot the honor that once made thee great, And stooped to this unhallowèd estate?
What, was it all for naught, those awful years That drenched a groaning land with blood and tears? Was it to leave this sly convenient hell, That brother fighting his own brother fell?	It cannot last, thou wilt come forth in might, A warrior queen full armored for the fight; And thou wilt take, e'en with thy spear in rest, Thy dusky children to thy saving breast.
When that great struggle held the world in awe, And all the nations blanched at what they saw, Did Sanctioned Slavery bow its conquered head That this unsanctioned crime might rise instead?	Till then, no more, no more the gladsome song, Strike only deeper chords, the notes of wrong; Till then, the sigh, the tear, the oath, the moan, Till thou, oh, South, and thine, come to thine own.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

THE HAUNTED OAK

PRAY why are you so bare, so bare,
Oh, bough of the old oak-tree;
And why, when I go through the
shade you throw,
Runs a shudder over me?

My leaves were green as the best,
I trow,
And sap ran free in my veins,
But I saw in the moonlight dim
and weird
A guiltless victim's pains.

I bent me down to hear his sigh;
I shook with his gurgling moan,
And I trembled sore when they
rode away,
And left him here alone.

They'd charged him with the old,
old crime,
And set him fast in jail:
Oh, why does the dog howl all
night long,
And why does the night wind
wail?

He prayed his prayer and he swore
his oath,
And he raised his hand to the
sky;
But the beat of hoofs smote on his
ear,
And the steady tread drew nigh.

Who is it rides by night, by night,
Over the moonlit road?

And what is the spur that keeps
the pace,

What is the galling goad?

And now they beat at the prison
door,

"Ho, keeper, do not stay!

We are friends of him whom you
hold within,

And we fain would take him
away

"From those who ride fast on our
heels

With mind to do him wrong;

They have no care for his inno-
cence,

And the rope they bear is
long."

They have fooled the jailer with
lying words,

They have fooled the man with
lies;

The bolts unbar, the locks are
drawn,

And the great door open flies.

Now they have taken him from
the jail,

And hard and fast they ride,

And the leader laughs low down
in his throat,

As they halt my trunk beside.

Oh, the judge, he wore a mask of
black,

And the doctor one of white,

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

And the minister, with his oldest
son,
Was curiously bedight.

Oh, foolish man, why weep you
now?

'T is but a little space,
And the time will come when these
shall dread
The mem'ry of your face.

I feel the rope against my bark,
And the weight of him in my
grain,

I feel in the throe of his final woe
The touch of my own last pain.

And never more shall leaves come
forth

On a bough that bears the ban;
I am burned with dread, I am
dried and dead,

From the curse of a guiltless
man.

And ever the judge rides by, rides
by,

And goes to hunt the deer,
And ever another rides his soul
In the guise of a mortal fear.

And ever the man he rides me
hard,

And never a night stays he;
For I feel his curse as a haunted
bough,

On the trunk of a haunted tree.

WELTSCHMERTZ

You ask why I am sad to-day,
I have no cares, no griefs, you say?
Ah, yes, 't is true, I have no
grief —

But — is there not the falling
leaf?

The bare tree there is mourning
left

With all of autumn's gray bereft;
It is not what has happened me,
Think of the bare, dismantled tree.

The birds go South along the sky,
I hear their lingering, long good-
bye.

Who goes reluctant from my
breast?

And yet — the lone and wind-
swept nest.

The mourning, pale-flowered
hearse goes by,

Why does a tear come to my eye?
Is it the March rain blowing
wild?

I have no dead, I know no child.

I am no widow by the bier
Of him I held supremely dear.
I have not seen the choicest one
Sink down as sinks the westering
sun.

Faith unto faith have I beheld,
For me, few solemn notes have
swelled;

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Love beckoned me out to the dawn,
And happily I followed on.

And yet my heart goes out to
them

Whose sorrow is their diadem;
The falling leaf, the crying bird,
The voice to be, all lost, un-
heard —

Not mine, not mine, and yet too
much

The thrilling power of human
touch,

While all the world looks on and
scorns

I wear another's crown of thorns.

Count me a priest who under-
stands

The glorious pain of nail-pierced
hands;

Count me a comrade of the thief
Hot driven into late belief.

Oh, mother's tear, oh, father's sigh,
Oh, mourning sweetheart's last
good-bye,

I yet have known no mourning
save

Beside some brother's brother's
grave.

ROBERT GOULD SHAW

WHY was it that the thunder
voice of Fate

Should call thee, studious, from
the classic groves,

Where calm-eyed Pallas with
still footstep roves,
And charge thee seek the turmoil
of the state?

What bade thee hear the voice and
rise elate,

Leave home and kindred and
thy spicy loaves,

To lead th' unlettered and de-
spised droves

To manhood's home and thunder
at the gate?

Far better the slow blaze of Learn-
ing's light,

The cool and quiet of her dearer
fane,

Than this hot terror of a hopeless
fight,

This cold endurance of the final
pain,—

Since thou and those who with
thee died for right

Have died, the Present teaches,
but in vain!

ROSES

OH, wind of the spring-time, oh,
free wind of May,

When blossoms and bird-song
are rife;

Oh, joy for the season, and joy for
the day,

That gave me the roses of life,
of life,

That gave me the roses of life.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

Oh, wind of the summer, sing
 loud in the night,
 When flutters my heart like a
 dove;

One came from thy kingdom, thy
 realm of delight,
 And gave me the roses of love,
 of love,
 And gave me the roses of love.

Oh, wind of the winter, sigh low
 in thy grief,
 I hear thy compassionate breath;
I wither, I fall, like the autumn-
 kissed leaf,
 He gave me the roses of death,
 of death,
 He gave me the roses of death.

A LOVE SONG

AH, love, my love is like a cry in
 the night,
A long, loud cry to the empty sky,
The cry of a man alone in the
 desert,
With hands uplifted, with parch-
 ing lips,

Oh, rescue me, rescue me,
Thy form to mine arms,
The dew of thy lips to my mouth,
Dost thou hear me?—my call
 thro' the night?

Darling, I hear thee and answer,
Thy fountain am I,

All of the love of my soul will I
 bring to thee,

All of the pains of my being shall
 wring to thee,

Deep and forever the song of my
 loving shall sing to thee,

Ever and ever thro' day and thro'
 night shall I cling to thee.

Hearst thou the answer?

Darling, I come, I come.

ITCHING HEELS

FU' de peace o' my eachin' heels,
 set down;

Don' fiddle dat chune no mo'.

Don' you see how dat melody stuhs
 me up

An' baigs me to tek to de flo'?

You knows I's a Christian, good
 an' strong;

I wusship f'om June to June;
My pra'ahs dey ah loud an' my
 hymns ah long:

I baig you don' fiddle dat chune.

I's a crick in my back an' a mis-
 ery hyeah

Whaih de j'int's 's gittin' ol' an'
 stiff,

But hit seems lak you brings me
 de bref o' my youf;

W'y, I's suttain I noticed a
 w'iff.

Don' fiddle dat chune no mo', my
 chile,

Don' fiddle dat chune no mo';

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

I'll git up an' taih up dis groun'
fu' a mile,
An' den I'll be chu'ched fu' it,
sho'.

Oh, fiddle dat chune some mo', I
say,

An' fiddle it loud an' fas':

I's a youngstah ergin in de mi'st
o' my sin;

De p'esent's gone back to de
pas'.

I'll dance to dat chune, so des fid-
dle erway;

I knows how de backslidah
feels;

So fiddle it on 'twell de break o'
de day

Fu' de sake o' my eachin' heels.

TO AN INGRATE

THIS is to-day, a golden summer's
day

And yet — and yet

My vengeful soul will not for-
get

The past, forever now forgot, you
say.

From that half height where I had
sadly climbed,

I stretched my hand,

I lone in all that land,

Down there, where, helpless, you
were limed.

Our fingers clasped, and dragging
me a pace,

You struggled up.

It is a bitter Cup,

That now for naught, you turn
away your face.

I shall remember this for aye and
aye.

Whate'er may come,

Although my lips are dumb,

My spirit holds you to that yester-
day.

IN THE TENTS OF AKBAR

IN the tents of Akbar

Are dole and grief to-day,

For the flower of all the Indies

Has gone the silent way.

In the tents of Akbar

Are emptiness and gloom,

And where the dancers gather,

The silence of the tomb.

Across the yellow desert,

Across the burning sands,

Old Akbar wanders madly,

And wrings his fevered hands.

And ever makes his moaning

To the unanswering sky,

For Sutna, lovely Sutna,

Who was so fair to die.

For Sutna danced at morning,

And Sutna danced at eve;

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

Her dusky eyes half hidden
Behind her silken sleeve.

Her pearly teeth out-glancing
Between her coral lips,
The tremulous rhythm of passion
Marked by her quivering hips.

As lovely as a jewel
Of fire and dewdrop blent,
So danced the maiden Sutna
In gallant Akbar's tent.

And one who saw her dancing,
Saw her bosom's fall and rise
Put all his body's yearning
Into his lovelit eyes.

Then Akbar came and drove
him —

A jackal — from his door,
And bade him wander far and look
On Sutna's face no more.

Some day the sea disgorges,
The wilderness gives back,
Those half-dead who have wandered,
Aimless, across its track.

And he returned — the lover,
Haggard of brow and spent;
He found fair Sutna standing
Before her master's tent.

"Not mine, nor Akbar's, Sutna!"
He cried and closely pressed,
And drove his craven dagger
Straight to the maiden's breast.

Oh, weep, oh, weep, for Sutna,
So young, so dear, so fair,
Her face is gray and silent
Beneath her dusky hair.

And wail, oh, wail, for Akbar,
Who walks the desert sands,
Crying aloud for Sutna,
Wringing his fevered hands.

In the tents of Akbar
The tears of sorrow run,
But the corpse of Sutna's slayer,
Lies rotting in the sun.

THE FOUNT OF TEARS

ALL hot and grimy from the road,
Dust gray from arduous years,
I sat me down and eased my load
Beside the Fount of Tears.

The waters sparkled to my eye,
Calm, crystal-like, and cool,
And breathing there a restful sigh,
I bent me to the pool.

When, lo! a voice cried: "Pilgrim,
rise,

Harsh tho' the sentence be,
And on to other lands and skies —
This fount is not for thee.

"Pass on, but calm thy needless
fears,

Some may not love or sin,
An angel guards the Fount of
Tears;

All may not bathe therein."

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Then with my burden on my back
I turned to gaze awhile,
First at the uninviting track,
Then at the water's smile.

And so I go upon my way,
Thro'out the sultry years,
But pause no more, by night, by
day,
Beside the Fount of Tears.

LIFE'S TRAGEDY

It may be misery not to sing at all
And to go silent through the
brimming day.

It may be sorrow never to be
loved,
But deeper griefs than these
beset the way.

To have come near to sing the
perfect song
And only by a half-tone lost
the key,

There is the potent sorrow, there
the grief,
The pale, sad staring of life's
tragedy.

To have just missed the perfect
love,
Not the hot passion of untem-
pered youth,
But that which lays aside its vanity
And gives thee, for thy trusting
worship, truth —

This, this it is to be accursed in-
deed;

For if we mortals love, or if we
sing,

We count our joys not by the
things we have,

But by what kept us from the
perfect thing.

DE WAY T'INGS COME

DE way t'ings come, hit seems to
me,

Is des' one monst'ous mystery;
De way hit seem to strike a man,
Dey ain't no sense, dey ain't no
plan;

Ef trouble sta'ts a pilin' down,
It ain't no use to rage er frown,
It ain't no use to strive er pray,
Hit's mortal boun' to come dat
way.

Now, ef you's hongry, an' yo' plate
Des' keep on sayin' to you,
"Wait,"

Don't mek no diffunce how you
feel,

'T won't do no good to hunt a
meal,

Fu' dat ah meal des' boun' to hide
Ontwell de devil's satisfied,
An' 'twell dey's some'p'n by to
cyave

You's got to ease yo'se'f an' sta've.

But ef dey's co'n meal on de she'f
You need n't bothah 'roun' yo'se'f,

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

Somebody 's boun' to amble in
An' 'vite you to dey co'n meal bin;
An' ef you 's stuffed up to be froat
Wid co'n er middlin', fowl er
shoat,

Des' look out an' you'll see fu'
sho

A 'possum faint befo' yo' do'.

De way t'ings happen, huhuh,
chile,

Dis worl' 's done puzzled me one
w'ile;

I 's mighty skeered I'll fall in
doubt,

I des' won't try to reason out
De reason why folks strive an'
plan

A dinnah fu' a full-fed man,
An' shet de do' an' cross de street
F'om one dat raaly needs to eat.

Shet yo' mouf, you rascal,
Wha' 's de use to cry?
You do' see no rain clouds
Up dah in de sky.

Dis hyeah sweat 's been po'in'
Down my face sence dawn;
Ain't hit time we 's hyeahin'
Dat ah dinnah ho'n?

Go on, Ben an' Jaspah,
Lif' yo' feet an' fly,
Hit out fu' de shadder
Fo' I drap an' die.

Hongry, lawd a' mussy,
Hongry as a baih,
Seems lak I hyeah dinnah
Callin' evahwhaih;
Daih 's de ho'n a blowin'!
Let dat cradle swing,
One mo' sweep, den da'kies,
Beat me to de spring!

NOON

SHADDER in de valley
Sunlight on de hill,
Sut'ny wish dat locus'
Knowed how to be still.
Don't de heat already
Mek a body hum,
'Dout dat insect sayin'
Hottah days to come?

Fiel' 's a shinin' yaller
Wid de bendin' grain,
Guinea hen a callin',
Now 's de time fu' rain;

AT THE TAVERN

A LILT and a swing,
And a ditty to sing,
Or ever the night grow old;
The wine is within,
And I 'm sure 't were a sin
For a soldier to choose to be cold,
my dear,
For a soldier to choose to be cold.

We're right for a spell,
But the fever is — well,
No thing to be braved, at least;

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

So bring me the wine;
No low fever in mine,
For a drink is more kind than a
priest, my dear,
For a drink is more kind than a
priest.

DEATH

STORM and strife and stress,
Lost in a wilderness,
Groping to find a way,
Forth to the haunts of day

Sudden a vista peeps,
Out of the tangled deeps,
Only a point — the ray
But at the end is day.

Dark is the dawn and chill,
Daylight is on the hill,
Night is the flitting breath,
Day rides the hills of death.

NIGHT, DIM NIGHT

Night, dim night, and it rains, my
love, it rains,
(Art thou dreaming of me, I
wonder)

The trees are sad, and the wind
complains,

Outside the rolling of the thun-
der,
And the beat against the panes.

Heart, my heart, thou art mourn-
ful in the rain,

(Are thy redolent lips a-
quiver?)

My soul seeks thine, doth it seek
in vain?

My love goes surging like a
river,
Shall its tide bear naught save
pain?

LYRICS OF LOVE AND SORROW

I

Love is the light of the world, my
 dear,
 Heigho, but the world is
 gloomy;
 The light has failed and the lamp
 down hurled,
 Leaves only darkness to me.

Love is the light of the world, my
 dear,
 Ah me, but the world is dreary;
 The night is down, and my curtain
 furled
 But I cannot sleep, though
 weary.

Love is the light of the world, my
 dear,
 Alas for a hopeless hoping,
 When the flame went out in the
 breeze that swirled,
 And a soul went blindly grop-
 ing.

II

THE light was on the golden
 sands,
 A glimmer on the sea;
 My soul spoke clearly to thy soul,
 Thy spirit answered me.
 Since then the light that gilds the
 sands,
 And glimmers on the sea,

But vainly struggles to reflect
 The radiant soul of thee.

III

THE sea speaks to me of you
 All the day long;
 Still as I sit by its side
 You are its song.

The sea sings to me of you
 Loud on the reef;
 Always it moans as it sings,
 Voicing my grief.

IV

My dear love died last night;
 Shall I clothe her in white?
 My passionate love is dead,
 Shall I robe her in red?
 But nay, she was all untrue,
 She shall not go drest in blue;
 Still my desolate love was brave,
 Unrobed let her go to her grave.

V

THERE are brilliant heights of
 sorrow
 That only the few may know;
 And the lesser woes of the world,
 like waves,
 Break noiselessly, far below.
 I hold for my own possessing,
 A mount that is lone and still —
 The great high place of a hopeless
 grief,

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

And I call it my "Heart-break
Hill."

And once on a winter's midnight
I found its highest crown,
And there in the gloom, my soul
and I,
Weeping, we sat us down.

But now when I seek that summit
We are two ghosts that go;

Only two shades of a thing that
died,

Once in the long ago.
So I sit me down in the silence,
And say to my soul, "Be still,"
So the world may not know we
died that night,
From weeping on "Heart-break
Hill."

LYRICS OF SUNSHINE AND SHADOW

A BOY'S SUMMER SONG

'Tis fine to play
In the fragrant hay,
And romp on the golden load;
To ride old Jack
To the barn and back,
Or tramp by a shady road.
To pause and drink,
At a mossy brink;
Ah, that is the best of joy,
And so I say
On a summer's day,
What's so fine as being a boy?
Ha, Ha!

With line and hook
By a babbling brook,
The fisherman's sport we ply;
And list the song
Of the feathered throng
That flit in the branches nigh.
At last we strip
For a quiet dip;
Ah, that is the best of joy.
For this I say
On a summer's day,
What's so fine as being a boy?
Ha, Ha!

THE SAND-MAN

I KNOW a man
With face of tan,
But who is ever kind;

Whom girls and boys
Leaves games and toys
Each eventide to find.

When day grows dim,
They watch for him,
He comes to place his claim;
He wears the crown
Of Dreaming-town;
The sand-man is his name.

When sparkling eyes
Troop sleepywise
And busy lips grow dumb;
When little heads
Nod toward the beds,
We know the sand-man's come.

JOHNNY SPEAKS

THE sand-man he's a jolly old
fellow,
His face is kind and his voice is
mellow,
But he makes your eyelids as heavy
as lead,
And then you got to go off to bed;
I don't think I like the sand-
man.

But I've been playing this live-
long day;
It does make a fellow so tired to
play!
Oh, my, I'm a-yawning right here
before ma,

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

I'm the sleepest fellow that ever
you saw.
I think I do like the sand-man.

WINTER-SONG

OH, who would be sad tho' the
sky be a-graying,
And meadow and woodlands are
empty and bare;
For softly and merrily now there
come playing,
The little white birds thro' the
winter-kissed air.
The squirrel's enjoying the rest
of the thrifty,
He munches his store in the old
hollow tree;
Tho' cold is the blast and the
snow-flakes are drifty
He fears the white flock not a
whit more than we.

Chorus:

Then heigho for the flying snow!
Over the whitened roads we go,
With pulses that tingle,
And sleigh-bells a-jingle
For winter's white birds here's a
cheery heigho!

A CHRISTMAS FOLKSONG

DE win' is blowin' wahmah,
An hit's blowin' f'om de bay;
Dey's a so't o' mist a-risin'
All erlong de meddah way;

Dey ain't a hint o' frostin'
On de groun' ner in de sky,
An' dey ain't no use in hopin'
Dat de snow'll 'mence to fly.
It's goin' to be a green Christ-
mas,
An' sad de day fu' me.
I wish dis was de las' one
Dat evah I should see.

Dey's dancin' in de cabin,
Dey's spahkin' by de tree;
But dancin' times an' spahkin'
Are all done pas' fur me.
Dey's feastin' in de big house,
Wid all de windahs wide —
Is dat de way fu' people
To meet de Christmas-tide?
It's goin' to be a green Christ-
mas,
No mattah what you say.
Dey's us dat will remembah
An' grieve de comin' day.

Dey's des a bref o' dampness
A-clingin' to my cheek;
De aih's been dahk an' heavy
An' threatenin' fu' a week,
But not wid signs o' wintah,
Dough wintah'd seem so deah —
De wintah's out o' season,
An' Christmas eve is heah.
It's goin' to be a green Christ-
mas,
An' oh, how sad de day!
Go ax de hongry chu'chya'd,
An' see what hit will say.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Dey's Allen on de hillside,
An' Marfy in de plain;
Fu' Christmas was like springtime,
An' come wid sun an' rain.
Dey's Ca'line, John, an' Susie,
Wid only dis one lef':
An' now de curse is comin'
Wid murder in hits bref.

It's goin' to be a green Christ-
mas —

Des hyeah my words an'
see:

Befo' de summah beckons
Dey's many'll weep wid
me.

THE FOREST GREETING

Good hunting! — aye, good hunt-
ing,

Wherever the forests call;
But ever a heart beats hot with
fear,
And what of the birds that fall?

Good hunting! — aye, good hunt-
ing,

Wherever the north winds
blow;
But what of the stag that calls for
his mate?

And what of the wounded doe?

Good hunting! — aye, good hunt-
ing;

And ah! we are bold and strong;

But our triumph call through the
forest hall

Is a brother's funeral song.

For we are brothers ever,
Panther and bird and bear;
Man and the weakest that fear his
face,

Born to the nest or lair.

Yes, brothers, and who shall judge
us?

Hunters and game are we;
But who gave the right for me to
smite?

Who boasts when he smiteth me?

Good hunting! — aye, good hunt-
ing,

And dim is the forest track;
But the sportsman Death comes
striding on:

Brothers, the way is black.

THE LILY OF THE VALLEY

SWEETEST of the flowers a-bloom-
ing

In the fragrant vernal days
Is the Lily of the Valley
With its soft, retiring ways.

Well, you chose this humble blos-
som

As the nurse's emblem flower,
Who grows more like her ideal
Every day and every hour.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

Like the Lily of the Valley
In her honesty and worth,
Ah, she blooms in truth and virtue
In the quiet nooks of earth.

Tho' she stands erect in honor
When the heart of mankind
bleeds,
Still she hides her own deserving
In the beauty of her deeds.

In the silence of the darkness
Where no eye may see and know,
There her footsteps shod with
mercy,
And fleet kindness come and go.

Not amid the sounds of plaudits,
Nor before the garish day,
Does she shed her soul's sweet per-
fume,

Does she take her gentle way.

But alike her ideal flower,
With its honey-laden breath,
Still her heart blooms forth its
beauty
In the valley shades of death.

ENCOURAGED

BECAUSE you love me I have
much achieved,
Had you despised me then I must
have failed,
But since I knew you trusted
and believed,

I could not disappoint you and so
prevailed.

TO J. Q.

WHAT are the things that make
life bright?

A star gleam in the night.
What hearts us for the coming
fray?

The dawn tints of the day.
What helps to speed the weary
mile?

A brother's friendly smile.
What turns o' gold the evening
gray?

A flower beside the way.

DIPLOMACY

TELL your love where the roses
blow,

And the hearts of the lilies
quiver,

Not in the city's gleam and glow,
But down by a half-sunned river.

Not in the crowded ball-room's
glare,

That would be fatal, Marie,
Marie,

How can she answer you then and
there?

So come then and stroll with me,
my dear,

Down where the birds call,
Marie, Marie.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

SCAMP

Ain't it nice to have a mammy .

W'en you kin' o' tiahed out

Wid a-playin' in de meddah,

An' a-runnin' roun' about

Till hit's made you mighty hongry,

An' yo' nose hit gits to know

What de smell means dat's a-
comin'

F'om de open cabin do'?

She wash yo' face,

An' mek yo' place,

You's hongry as a tramp;

Den hit's eat you suppah right
away,

You sta'vin' little scamp.

W'en you's full o' braid an' bacon,

An' dey ain't no mo' to eat,

An' de lasses dat's a-stickin'

On yo' face ta'se kin' o' sweet,

Don' you t'ink hit's kin' o' pleasin'

Fu' to have som'boday neah

Dat'll wipe yo' han's an' kiss you

Fo' dey lif' you f'om you' cheah?

To smile so sweet,

An' wash yo' feet,

An' leave 'em co'l an' damp;

Den hit's come let me undress
you, now

You lazy little scamp.

Don' yo' eyes git awful heavy,

An' yo' lip git awful slack,

Ain't dey som'p'n' kin' o' weak-
nin'

In de backbone of yo' back?

Don' yo' knees feel kin' o' trimbly,

An' yo' head go bobb'in' roun',

W'en you says yo' "Now I lay
me,"

An' is sno'in on de "down"?

She kiss yo' nose,

She kiss yo' toes,

An' den tu'n out de lamp,

Den hit's creep into yo' trunnel
baid,

You sleepy little scamp.

WADIN' IN DE CRICK

DAYS git wa'm an' wa'mah,

School gits mighty dull,

Seems lak dese hyeah teachahs

Mus' feel mussiful.

Hookey's wrong, I know it

Ain't no gent'man's trick;

But de aih's a-callin',

"Come on to de crick."

Dah de watah's gu'glin'

Ovah shiny stones,

Des hit's ve'y singin'

Seems to soothe yo' bones.

W'at's de use o' waitin'

Go on good an' quick:

Dain't no fun lak dis hyeah

Wadin' in de crick.

W'at dat jay-b'ud sayin'?

Bettah shet yo' haid,

Fus' t'ing dat you fin' out,

You'll be layin' daid.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

Jay-bu'ds sich a tattlah,
Des seem lak his trick
Fu' to tell on folkses
Wadin' in de crick.

Willer boughs a-bendin'
Hidin' of de sky,
Wavin' kin' o' frien'ly
Ez de win' go by,
Elum trees a-shinin',
Dahk an' green an' thick,
Seem to say, "I see yo'
Wadin' in de crick."

But de trees don' chattah,
Dey des look an' sigh
Lak hit's kin' o' peaceful
Des a-bein' nigh,
An' yo' t'ank yo' Mastah
Dat dey trunks is thick
W'en yo' mammy fin's you
Wadin' in de crick.

Den yo' run behin' dem
Lak yo' scaihed to def,
Mammy come a-flyin',
Mos' nigh out o' bref;
But she set down gentle
An' she drap huh stick,—
An' fus' t'ing, dey's mammy
Wadin' in de crick.

THE QUILTING

DOLLY sits a-quilting by her
mother, stich by stich,
Gracious, how my pulses throb,
how my fingers itch,

While I note her dainty waist and
her slender hand,
As she matches this and that, she
stitches strand by strand.
And I long to tell her Life's a
quilt and I'm a patch;
Love will do the stitching if she'll
only be my match.

PARTED

SHE wrapped her soul in a lace of
lies,
With a prime deceit to pin it;
And I thought I was gaining a
fearsome prize,
So I staked my soul to win it.

We wed and parted on her com-
plaint,
And both were a bit of barter,
Tho' I'll confess that I'm no saint,
I'll swear that she's no martyr.

FOREVER

I HAD not known before
Forever was so long a word.
The slow stroke of the clock of
time
I had not heard.

'Tis hard to learn so late;
It seems no sad heart really
learns,
But hopes and trusts and doubts
and fears,
And bleeds and burns.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

The night is not all dark,
Nor is the day all it seems,
But each may bring me this relief —
My dreams and dreams.

I had not known before
That Never was so sad a word,
So wrap me in forgetfulness —
I have not heard.

THE PLANTATION CHILD'S LULLABY

WINTAH time hit comin'
Stealin' thoo de night;
Wake up in the mo'nin'
Evah t'ing is white;
Cabin lookin' lonesome
Stannin' in de snow,
Meks you kin' o' nervous,
W'en de win' hit blow.

Trompin' back from feedin',
Col' an' wet an' blue,
Homespun jacket ragged,
Win' a-blowin' thoo.
Cabin lookin' cheerful,
Unnerneaf de do',
Yet you kin' o' keerful
W'en de win' hit blow.

Hickory log a-blazin'
Light a-lookin' red,
Faith o' eyes o' peepin'
'Rom a trun'le bed,
Little feet a-patterin'
Cleak across de flo';

Bettah had be keerful
W'en de win' hit blow.

Suppah done an' ovah,
Evah t'ing is still;
Listen to de snowman
Slippin' down de hill.
Ashes on de fiah,
Keep it wa'm but low.
What's de use o' keerin'
Ef de win' do blow?

Smoke house full o' bacon,
Brown an' sweet an' good;
Taters in de cèllah,
'Possum roam de wood;
Little baby snoozin'
Des ez ef he know.
What's de use o' keerin'
Ef de win' do blow?

TWILIGHT

'TwiXT a smile and a tear,
'TwiXT a song and a sigh,
'TwiXT the day and the dark,
When the night draweth nigh.

Ah, sunshine may fade
From the heavens above,
No twilight have we
To the day of our love.

CURIOSITY

MAMMY'S in de kitchen, an' de
do' is shet;
All de pickaninnies climb an' tug
an' sweat,

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

Gittin' to de winder, stickin' dah
lak flies,
Evah one ermong us des all nose
an' eyes.

"Whut's she cookin', Isaac?"
"Whut's she cookin', Jake?"
"Is it sweet pertaters? Is hit pie
er cake?"

But we couldn't mek out even
whah we stood
Whut was mammy cookin' dat
could smell so good.

Mammy spread de winder, an'
she frown an' frown,
How de pickaninnies come a-tum-
blin' down!
Den she say: "Ef you-all keeps
a-peepin' in,
How I'se gwine to whup you, my!
't 'ill be a sin!
Need n' come a-sniffin' an' a-nosin'
hyeah,
'Ca'se I knows my business, nevah
feah."

Won't somebody tell us — how I
wish dey would! —
Whut is mammy cookin' dat it
smells so good?

We know she means business, an'
we dassent stay,
Dough it's mighty tryin' fuh to
go erway;
But we goes a-troopin' down de
ol' wood-track

'Twell dat steamin' kitchen brings
us stealin' back,
Climbin' an' a-peepin' so's to see
inside.

Whut on earf kin mammy be so
sha'p to hide?
I'd des up an' tell folks w'en I
knowed I could,
Ef I was a-cookin' t'ings dat smelt
so good.

Mammy in de oven, an' I see huh
smile;
Moufs mus' be a-wat'rin' roun'
hyeah fuh a mile;
Den we almos' hollah ez we hu'ies
down,
'Ca'se hit's apple dumplin's, big an'
fat an' brown!
W'en de do' is opened, solemn lak
an' slow,
Wisht you see us settin' all dah
in a row
Innercent an' p'opah, des lak chill-
un should
W'en dey mammy's cookin' t'ings
dat smell so good.

OPPORTUNITY

GRANNY's gone a-visitin',
Seen huh git huh shawl
W'en I was a-hidin' down
Hime de gyahden wall.
Seen huh put her bonnet on,
Seen huh tie de strings,
An' I'se gone to dreamin' now
'Bout dem cakes an' t'ings.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

On de she'f behime de do'—

Mussy, what a fea's!

Soon ez she gits out o' sight,

I kin eat in peace.

I bin watchin' fu' a week

Des fu' dis hyeah chance.

Mussy, w'en I gits in daih,

I'll des sholy dance.

Lemon pie an' gingah-cake,

Let me set an' t'ink —

Vinegah an' sugah, too,

Dat'll mek a drink;

Ef dey's one t'ing dat I loves

Mos' pu'ticlahly,

It is eatin' sweet t'ings an'

A-drinkin' Sangaree.

Lawdy, won' po' granny raih

W'en she see de she'f;

W'en I t'ink erbout huh face,

I's mos' 'shamed myse'f.

Well, she gone, an' 'hyeah I is,

Back behime de do'—

Look hyeah! gran' 's done 'spected
me,

Dain't no sweets no mo'.

Evah sweet is hid erway,

Job des done up brown;

Pusson t'ink dat someun t'ought

Dey was t'eves erroun';

Dat des breaks my heart in two,

Oh how bad I feel!

Des to t'ink my own gramma

B'lieved dat I 'u'd steal!

PUTTIN' THE BABY AWAY

EIGHT of 'em hyeah all tol' an' yet

Dese eyes o' mine is wringin' wet;

My haht's a-achin' ha'd an' so',

De way hit nevah ached befo';

My soul's a-pleadin', "Lawd, give
back

Dis little lonesome baby black,

Dis one, dis las' po' he'pless one

Whose little race was too soon
run."

Po' Little Jim, des fo' yeahs ol'

A-layin' down so still an' col'.

Somehow hit don' seem ha'dly
faih,

To have my baby lyin' daih

Wi'dout a smile upon his face,

Wi'dout a look erbout de place;

He ust to be so full o' fun

Hit don' seem right dat all's done,
done.

Des eight in all but I don' caih,

Dey wa'nt a single one to spaih;

De worl' was big, so was my haht,

An' dis hyeah baby owned hit's
pah;

De house was po', dey clothes was
rough,

But daih was meat an' meal
enough;

An' daih was room fu' little Jim;

Oh! Lawd, what made you call fu'
him?

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

It do seem monst'ous ha'd to-day,
To lay dis baby boy away;
I'd learned to love his teasin'
smile,
He mought o' des been lef' er-
while;
You wouldn't t'ought wid all de
folks,
Dat's roun' hyeah mixin' teahs an'
jokes,
De Lawd u'd had de time to see
Dis chile an' tek him 'way f'om
me.

But let it go, I reckon Jim,
'Ll des go right straight up to
Him
Dat took him f'om his mammy's
nest
An' lef' dis achin' in my breas',
An' lookin' in dat fathah's face
An' 'memberin' dis lone sorrerin'
place,
He'll say, "Good Lawd, you ought
to had
Do sumpin' fu' to comfo't dad!"

THE FISHER CHILD'S LUL- LABY

THE wind is out in its rage to-
night,
And your father is far at sea.
The rime on the window is hard
and white
But dear, you are near to me.

Heave ho, weave low,
Waves of the briny deep;
Seethe low and breathe low,
But sleep you, my little one,
sleep, sleep.

The little boat rocks in the cove no
more,
But the flying sea-gulls wail;
I peer through the darkness that
wraps the shore,
For sight of a home set sail.
Heave ho, weave low,
Waves of the briny deep;
Seethe low and breathe low,
But sleep you, my little one,
sleep, sleep.

Ay, lad of mine, thy father may
die
In the gale that rides the sea,
But we'll not believe it, not you
and I,
Who mind us of Galilee.
Heave ho, weave low,
Waves of the briny deep;
Seethe low and breathe low,
But sleep you, my little one,
sleep, sleep.

FAITH

I's a-gittin' weary of de way dat
people do,
De folks dat's got dey 'ligion in
dey fiah-place an' flue;
Dey's allus somep'n comin' so de
spit'll have to turn,

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

An' hit tain't no p'oposition fu' to
mek de hickory bu'n.
Ef de sweet pertater fails us an' de
go'geous yallah yam,
We kin tek a bit o' comfo't f'om
ouah sto' o' summah jam.
W'en de snow hit git to flyin',
dat's de Mastah's own desiah,
De Lawd'll run de wintah an' yo'
mammy'll run de fiah.

I ain' skeered because de win' hit
staht to raih and blow,
I ain't bothahed w'en he come er
rattlin' at de do',
Let him taih hisse'f an' shout, let
him blow an' bawl,

Dat's de time de branches shek an'
bresh-wood 'mence to fall.
W'en de sto'm er railin' an' de
shettahs blowin' 'bout,
Dat de time de fiah-place crack
hits welcome out.
'Tain' my livin' business fu' to
trouble ner enquiah,
De Lawd'll min' de wintah an' my
mammy'll min' de fiah.

Ash-cake allus gits ez brown w'en
February's hyeah
Ez it does in bakin' any othah time
o' yeah.
De bacon smell ez callin'-like, de
kittle rock an' sing,
De same way in de wintah dat dey
do it in de spring;

Dey ain't no use in mopin' 'round
an' lookin' mad an' glum
Erbout de wintah season, fu' hit's
des plumb boun' to come;

An' ef it comes to runnin' t'ings
I's willin' to retiah,
De Lawd'll min' de wintah an'
my mammy'll min' de fiah.

THE FARM CHILD'S LULLABY

OH, the little bird is rocking in
the cradle of the wind,
And it's bye, my little wee one,
bye;

The harvest all is gathered and
the pippins all are binned;
Bye, my little wee one, bye;

The little rabbit's hiding in the
golden shock of corn,
The thrifty squirrel's laughing
bunny's idleness to scorn;

You are smiling with the angels
in your slumber, smile till
morn;

So it's bye, my little wee one,
bye.

There'll be plenty in the cellar,
there'll be plenty on the
shelf;

Bye, my little wee one, bye;
There'll be goodly store of sweet-
ings for a dainty little elf;
Bye, my little wee one, bye.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

The snow may be a-flying o'er the
meadow and the hill,
The ice has checked the chatter of
the little laughing rill,
But in your cosey cradle you are
warm and happy still;
So bye, my little wee one, bye.

Why, the Bob White thinks the
snowflake is a brother to his
song;

Bye, my little wee one, bye;
And the chimney sings the sweeter
when the wind is blowing
strong;

Bye, my little wee one, bye;
The granary's overflowing, full is
cellar, crib, and bin,

The wood has paid its tribute and
the ax has ceased its din;

The winter may not harm you
when you're sheltered safe
within;

So bye, my little wee one, bye.

THE PLACE WHERE THE RAINBOW ENDS

THERE'S a fabulous story
Full of splendor and glory,
That Arabian legends trans-
cends;

Of the wealth without measure,
The coffers of treasure,

At the place where the rainbow
ends.

Oh, many have sought it,
And all would have bought it,
With the blood we so recklessly
spend;

But none has uncovered,
The gold, nor discovered
The spot at the rainbow's end.

They have sought it in battle,
And e'en where the rattle
Of dice with man's blasphemy
blends;

But howe'er persuasive,
It still proves evasive,
This place where the rainbow
ends.

I own for my pleasure,
I yearn not for treasure,
Though gold has a power it
lends;

And I have a notion,
To find without motion,
The place where the rainbow
ends.

The pot may hold pottage,
The place be a cottage,
That a humble contentment de-
fends,

Only joy fills its coffer,
But spite of the scoffer,
There's the place where the rain-
bow ends.

Where care shall be quiet,
And love shall run riot,

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

And I shall find wealth in my
 friends;
Then truce to the story,
Of riches and glory;
 There's the place where the rain-
 bow ends.

HOPE

DE dog go howlin' 'long de road,
 De night come shiverin' down;
My back is tiahed of its load,
 I cain't be fu' f'om town.
No mattah ef de way is long,
My haht is swellin' wid a song,
 No mattah 'bout de frownin'
 skies,
I'll soon be home to see my Lize.

My shadder staggah on de way,
 It's monstous col' to-night;
But I kin hyeah my honey say
 "W'y bless me if de sight
O' you ain't good fu' my so'
 eyes."
(Dat talk's dis lak my lady Lize)
 I's so'y case de way was long
 But Lawd you bring me love
 an' song.

No mattah ef de way is long,
 An' ef I trimbles so'
I knows de fiah's burnin' strong,
 Behime my Lizy's do'.
An' daih my res' an' joy shell be,
Whaih my ol' wife's awaitin'
 me —

Why what I keer fu' stingin'
 blas',
I see huh windah light at las'.

APPRECIATION

MY muvver's ist the nicest one
 'At ever lived wiz folks;
She lets you have ze mostes' fun,
 An' laffs at all your jokes.

I got a ol' maid auntie, too,
 The worst you ever saw;
Her eyes ist bore you through and
 through,—
She ain't a bit like ma.

She's ist as slim as slim can be,
 An' when you want to slide
Down on ze balusters, w'y she
 Says 'at she's harrified.

She ain't as nice as Uncle Ben,
 What says 'at little boys
Won't never grow to be big men
 Unless they're fond of noise.

But muvver's nicer zan 'em all,
 She calls you, "precious lamb,"
An' let's you roll your ten-pin ball,
 An' spreads your bread wiz jam.

An' when you're bad, she ist looks
 sad,
 You fink she's goin' to cry;
An' when she don't you're awful
 glad,
An' den you're good, Oh, my!

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

At night, she takes ze softest
hand,

An' lays it on your head,
An' says "Be off to Sleepy-Land
By way o' trundle-bed."

So when you fink what muvver
knows

An' aunts an' uncle tan't,
It skeers a feller; ist suppose
His muvver 'd been a aunt.

A SONG

ON a summer's day as I sat by a
stream,

A dainty maid came by,
And she blessed my sight like a
rosy dream,

And left me there to sigh, to
sigh,

And left me there to sigh, to
sigh.

On another day as I sat by the
stream,

This maiden paused a while,
Then I made me bold as I told
my dream,

She heard it with a smile, a
smile,

She heard it with a smile, a
smile.

Oh, the months have fled and the
autumn's red,

The maid no more goes by;

For my dream came true and the
maid I wed,

And now no more I sigh, I
sigh,

And now no more I sigh.

DAY

THE gray dawn on the mountain
top

Is slow to pass away.
Still lays him by in sluggish
dreams,

The golden God of day.

And then a light along the hills,
Your laughter silvery gay;
The Sun God wakes, a bluebird
trills,

You come and it is day.

TO DAN

STEP me now a bridal measure,
Work give way to love and leisure,
Hearts be free and hearts be gay —
Doctor Dan doth wed to-day.

Diagnosis, cease your squalling —
Check that scalpel's senseless bawl-
ing,

Put that ugly knife away —
Doctor Dan doth wed to-day.

'Tis no time for things unsightly,
Life's the day and life goes lightly;
Science lays aside her sway —
Love rules Dr. Dan to-day.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Gather, gentlemen and ladies,
For the nuptial feast now made
is,
Swing your garlands, chant your
lay
For the pair who wed to-day.

Wish them happy days and many,
Troubles few and griefs not any,
Lift your brimming cups and say
God bless them who wed to-day.

Then a cup to Cupid daring,
Who for conquest ever faring,
With his arrows dares assail
E'en a doctor's coat-of mail.

So with blithe and happy hymning
And with harmless goblets brim-
ming,
Dance a step — musicians play —
Doctor Dan doth wed to-day.

WHAT'S THE USE

WHAT'S the use o' folks a-frownin'
When the way's a little rough?
Frowns lay out the road fur smil-
in'

You'll be wrinkled soon enough.
What's the use?

What's the use o' folks a-sighin'?
It's an awful waste o' breath,
An' a body can't stand wastin'
What he needs so bad in death.
What's the use?

What's the use o' even weepin'?
Might as well go long an' smile.
Life, our longest, strongest arrow,
Only lasts a little while.
What's the use?

A LAZY DAY

THE trees bend down along the
stream,

Where anchored swings my tiny
boat.

The day is one to drowse and
dream

And list the thrush's throttling
note.

When music from his bosom bleeds
Among the river's rustling reeds.

No ripple stirs the placid pool,
When my adventurous line is
cast,

A truce to sport, while clear and
cool,

The mirrored clouds slide softly
past.

The sky gives back a blue divine,
And all the world's wide wealth
is mine.

A pickerel leaps, a bow of light,
The minnows shine from side to
side.

The first faint breeze comes up
the tide —

I pause with half uplifted oar,
While night drifts down to claim
the shore.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

ADVICE

W'EN you full o' worry
 'Bout yo' wo'k an' sich,
W'en you kind o' bothered
 Case you can't get rich,
An' yo' neighboh p'ospah
 Past his jest desu'ts,
An' de sneer of comerds
 Stuhes yo' heaft an' hu'ts,
Des don' pet yo' worries,
 Lay 'em on de she'f,
Tek a little trouble
 Brothah, wid yo'se'f.

Ef a frien' comes mou'nin'
 'Bout his awful case,
You know you don' grieve him
 Wid a gloomy face,
But you wrassle wid him,
 Try to tek him in;
Dough hit cracks yo' features,
 Law, you smile lak sin,
Ain't you good ez he is?
 Don' you pine to def;
Tek a little trouble
 Brothah, wid yo'se'f.

Ef de chillun pestahs,
 An' de baby's bad,
Ef yo' wife gits narvous,
 An' you're gettin' mad,
Des you grab yo' boot-strops,
 Hol' yo' body down,
Stop a-tinkin' cuss-w'rd,
 Chase away de frown,
Knock de haid o' worry,
 Twell dey ain' none lef';

Tek a little trouble,
 Brothah, wid yo'se'f.

LIMITATIONS

Ef you's only got de powah fe' to
 blow a little whistle,
 Keep ermong de people wid de
 whistles.

Ef you don't, you'll fin' out sho'tly
 dat you's th'owed yo' fines'
 feelin'

In a place dat's all a bed o' this-
 tles.

'Tain't no use a-goin' now, ez
 sho's you bo'n,
A-squeakin' of yo' whistle 'g'inst
 a gread big ho'n.

Ef you ain't got but a teenchy bit
 o' victuals on de table,
 Whut' de use a-claimin' hit's a
 feas'?

Fe' de folks is mighty 'spicious,
 an' dey's ap' to come a-
 peerin',

Lookin' fe' de scraps you lef'
 at leas'.

W'en de meal's a-hidin' f'om de
 meal-bin's top,

You needn't talk to hide it; ef you
 sta'ts, des stop.

Ef yo' min' kin only carry half a
 pint o' common idees,
 Don' go roun' a-sayin' hit's a
 bar'l;

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

'Ca'se de people gwine to test you,
an' dey'll fin' out you's
a-lyin',
Den dey'll twis' yo' sayin's in a
snarl.
Wuss t'ing in de country dat I
evah hyahed —
A crow dot sat a-squawkin', "I's
a mockin'-bird."

A GOLDEN DAY

I FOUND you and I lost you,
All on a gleaming day.
The day was filled with sunshine,
And the land was full of May.

A golden bird was singing
Its melody divine,
I found you and I loved you,
And all the world was mine.

I found you and I lost you,
All on a golden day,
But when I dream of you, dear,
It is always brimming May.

THE UNLUCKY APPLE

'Twas the apple that in Eden
Caused our father's primal fall;
And the Trojan War, remem-
ber —

'Twas an apple caused it all.
So for weeks I've hesitated,
You can guess the reason why,
For I want to tell my darling
She's the apple of my eye.

THE DISCOVERY

THESE are the days of elfs and
fays:

Who says that with the dreams of
myth,
These imps and elves disport them-
selves?

Ah no, along the paths of song
Do all the tiny folk belong.

Round all our homes,
Kobolds and gnomes do daily cling,
Then nightly fling their lanterns
out.

And shout on shout, they join the
rout,
And sing, and sing, within the
sweet enchanted ring.

Where gleamed the guile of moon-
light's smile,
Once paused I, listening for a
while,
And heard the lay, unknown by
day,—
The fairies' dancing roundelay.

Queen Mab was there, her shim-
mering hair
Each fairy prince's heart's despair.
She smiled to see their sparkling
glee,
And once I ween, she smiled at me.

Since when, you may by night or
day,
Dispute the sway of elf-folk gay;
But, hear me, stay!

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

I've learned the way to find Queen
Mab and elf and fay.

Where e'er by streams, the moon-
light gleams,
Or on a meadow softly beams,
There, footing round on dew-lit
ground,
The fairy folk may all be found.

MORNING

THE mist has left the greening
plain,
The dew-drops shine like fairy
rain,
The coquette rose awakes again
Her lovely self adorning.
The Wind is hiding in the trees,
A sighing, soothing, laughing
tease,
Until the rose says "Kiss me,
please,"
'Tis morning, 'tis morning.

With staff in hand and careless-
free,
The wanderer fares right jauntily,
For towns and houses are, thinks
he,
For scorning, for scorning.
My soul is swift upon the wing,
And in its deeps a song I bring;
Come, Love, and we together sing,
" 'Tis morning, 'tis morning."

THE AWAKENING

I DID not know that life could be
so sweet,
I did not know the hours could
speed so fleet,
Till I knew you, and life was sweet
again.
The days grew brief with love
and lack of pain —

I was a slave a few short days
ago,
The powers of Kings and Princes
now I know;
I would not be again in bondage,
save
I had your smile, the liberty I
crave.

LOVE'S DRAFT

THE draft of love was cool and
sweet
You gave me in the cup,
But, ah, love's fire is keen and
fleet,
And I am burning up.
Unless the tears I shed for you
Shall quench this burning flame,
It will consume me through and
through,
And leave but ash—a name.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

A MUSICAL

OUTSIDE the rain upon the street,
The sky all grim of hue,
Inside, the music-painful sweet,
And yet I heard but you.

As is a thrilling violin,
So is your voice to me,
And still above the other strains,
It sang in ecstasy.

TWELL DE NIGHT IS PAS'

ALL de night long twell de moon
goes down,
Lovin' I set at huh feet,
Den fu' de long jou'ney back
f'om de town,
Ha'd, but de dreams mek it
sweet.

All de night long twell de break of
de day,
Dreamin' agin in my sleep,
Mandy comes drivin' my sorrers
away,
Axin' me, "Wha' fu' you
weep?"

All de day long twell de sun goes
down,
Smilin', I ben' to my hoe,
Fu' dough de weddah git nasty an'
frown,
One place I know I kin go.

All my life long twell de night has
pas'

Let de wo'k come ez it will,
So dat I fin' you, my honey, at las',
Somewhaih des ovah de hill.

BLUE

STANDIN' at de winder,
Feelin' kind o' glum,
Listenin' to de raindrops
Play de kettle drum,
Lookin' crost de medders
Swimmin' lak a sea;
Lawd 'a' mussy on us,
What's de good o' me?

Can't go out a-hoein',
Wouldn't ef I could;
Groun' too wet fu' huntin',
Fishin' ain't no good.
Too much noise fo' sleepin',
No one hyeah to chat;
Des mus' stan' an' listen
To dat pit-a-pat.

Hills is gittin' misty,
Valley's gittin' dahk;
Watch-dog's 'mence a-howlin',
Rathah have 'em ba'k
Dan a-moanin' solemn
Somewhaih out o' sight;
Rain-crow des a-chucklin'—
Dis is his delight.

Mandy, bring my banjo,
Bring de chillen in,

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

Come in f'om de kitchen,
I feel sick ez sin.
Call in Uncle Isaac,
Call Aunt Hannah, too,
Tain't no use in talkin',
Chile, I's sholy blue.

DREAMIN' TOWN

COME away to dreamin' town,
Mandy Lou, Mandy Lou,
Whaih de skies don' nevah frown,
Mandy Lou;
Whaih he streets is paved with
gol',
Whaih de days is nevah col',
An' no sheep strays f'om de fol',
Mandy Lou.

Ain't you tiahed of every day,
Mandy Lou, Mandy Lou,
Tek my han' an' come away,
Mandy Lou,
To the place whaih dreams is
King,
Whaih my heart hol's everything,
An' my soul can allus sing,
Mandy Lou.

Come away to dream wid me,
Mandy Lou, Mandy Lou,
Whaih our hands an' hea'ts are
free,
Mandy Lou;
Whaih de sands is shinin' white,
Whaih de rivahs glistens bright,
Mandy Lou.

Come away to dreamland town,
Mandy Lou, Mandy Lou,
Whaih de fruit is bendin' down,
Des fu' you.
Smooth your brow of lovin' brown,
An' my love will be its crown;
Come away to dreamin' town,
Mandy Lou.

AT NIGHT

WHUT time 'd dat clock strike?
Nine? No — eight;
I didn't think hit was so late.
Aer chew! I must 'a' got a cough,
I raally b'lieve I did doze off —
Hit's mighty soothin' to de tiah,
A-dozin' dis way by de fiah;
Oo oom — hit feels so good to
stretch
I sutny is one weary wretch!

Look hyeah, dat boy done gone to
sleep!
He des ain't wo'th his boa'd an'
keep;
I des don't b'lieve he'd bat his
eyes
If Gab'el called him fo'm de
skies!
But sleepin's good dey ain't no
doubt —
Dis pipe o' mine is done gone
out.
Don't bu'n a minute, bless my soul,
Des please to han' me dat ah
coal.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

You 'Lias git up now, my son,
Seems lak my nap is des begun;
You sutny mus' ma'k down de day'
W'en I treats comp'ny dis away!
W'y, Brother Jones, dat drowse
come on,
An' laws! I drempt dat you was
gone!
You 'Lias, whaih yo' mannaahs,
suh,
To hyeah me call an' nevah
stuh!

To-morrer mo'nin' w'en I call
Dat boy'll be sleepin' to beat all,
Don't mek no diffunce how I roah,
He'll des 'lay up an' sno' and
sno'.
Now boy, you done hyeahed whut
I said,
You bettah tek yo'se'f yo baid,
Case ef you gits me good an'
wrong
I'll mek dat sno' a diffunt song.

Dis wood fiah is invitin' dho',
Hit seems to wa'm de ve'y flo'—
An' nuffin' ain't a whit ez sweet,
Ez settin' toastin' of yo' feet.
Hit mek you drowsy, too, but La!
Hyeah, 'Lias, don't you hyeah
yo' ma?
Ef I gits sta'ted f'om dis cheah
I' lay, you scamp, I'll mek you
heah!
To-morrer mo'nin' I kin bawl
Twell all de neighbors hyeah
me call;

An' you'll be snoozin' des ez deep
Ez if de day was made fu' sleep;
Hit's funny when you got a cough
Somehow yo' voice seems too fu'
off—
Can't wake dat boy fu' all I say,
I reckon he'll sleep daih twell
day!

KIDNAPED

I HELD my heart so far from harm,
I let it wander far and free
In mead and mart, without alarm,
Assured it must come back to
me.

And all went well till on a day,
Learned Dr. Cupid wandered
by
A search along our sylvan way
For some peculiar butterfly.

A flash of wings, a hurried dive,
A flutter and a short-lived flit;
This Scientist, as I am alive
Had seen my heart and captured
it.

Right tightly now 'tis held among
The specimens that he has
trapped,
And sings (Oh, love is ever
young),
'Tis passing sweet to be kid-
naped.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

COMPENSATION

BECAUSE I had loved so deeply,
Because I had loved so long,
God in His great compassion
Gave me the gift of song.

Because I have loved so vainly,
And sung with such faltering
breath,
The Master in infinite mercy
Offers the boon of Death.

WINTER'S APPROACH

DE sun hit shine an' de win' hit
blow,
Ol' Brer Rabbit be a-layin' low,
He know dat de wintah time
a-comin',
De huntah man he walk an' wait,
He walk right by Brer Rabbit's
gate —
He know —

De dog he lick his sliverin' chop,
An' he tongue 'gin' his mouf go
flop, flop —
He —

He rub his nose fu' to clah his
scent
So's to tell w'ich way dat cotton-
tail went,
He —

De huntah's wife she set an' spin
A good wahm coat fu' to wrop him
in
She —

She look at de skillet an' she smile,
oh my!
An' ol' Brer Rabbit got to sholy
fly.
Dey know.

ANCHORED

IF thro' the sea of night which
here surrounds me,
I could swim out beyond the
farthest star,
Break every barrier of circumstance
that bounds me,
And greet the Sun of sweeter
life afar,
Tho' near you there is passion,
grief, and sorrow,
And out there rest and joy and
peace and all,
I should renounce that beckoning
for to-morrow,
I could not choose to go beyond
your call.

THE VETERAN

UNDERNEATH the autumn sky,
Haltingly, the lines go by.
Ah, would steps were blithe and
gay,
As when first they marched away,
Smile on lip and curl on brow,—
Only white-faced gray-beards now,
Standing on life's outer verge,
E'en the marches sound a dirge.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Blow, you bugles, play, you fife,
Rattle, drums, for dearest life.
Let the flags wave freely so,
As the marching legions go,
Shout, hurrah and laugh and jest,
This is memory at its best.
(Did you notice at your quip,
That old comrade's quivering lip?)

Ah, I see them as they come,
Stumbling with the rumbling
drum;

But a sight more sad to me
E'en than these ranks could be
Was that one with cane upraised
Who stood by and gazed and
gazed,

Trembling, solemn, lips com-
pressed,
Longing to be with the rest.

Did he dream of old alarms,
As he stood, "presented arms" ?
Did he think of field and camp
And the unremitting tramp
Mile on mile—the lonely guard
When he kept his midnight ward?
Did he dream of wounds and scars
In that bitter war of wars?

What of that? He stood and
stands

In my memory — trembling hands,
Whitened beard and cane and all
As if waiting for the call
Once again: "To arms, my sons,"

And his ears hear far-off guns,
Roll of cannon and the tread
Of the legions of the Dead!

YESTERDAY AND TO- MORROW

YESTERDAY I held your hand,
Reverently I pressed it,
And its gentle yieldingness
From my soul I blessed it.

But to-day I sit alone,
Sad and sore repining;
Must our gold forever know
Flames for the refining?

Yesterday I walked with you,
Could a day be sweeter?
Life was all a lyric song
Set to tricky meter.

Ah, to-day is like a dirge,—
Place my arms around you,
Let me feel the same dear joy
As when first I found you.

Let me once retrace my steps,
From these roads unpleasant,
Let my heart and mind and soul
All ignore the present.

Yesterday the iron seared
And to-day means sorrow.
Pause, my soul, arise, arise,
Look where gleams the morrow.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

THE CHANGE

LOVE used to carry a bow, you
know,

But now he carries a taper;
It is either a length of wax aglow,
Or a twist of lighted paper.

I pondered a little about the scamp,
And then I decided to follow
His wandering journey to field and
camp,
Up hill, down dale or hollow.

I dogged the rollicking, gay, young
blade
In every species of weather;
Till, leading me straight to the
home of a maid
He left us there together.

And then I saw it, oh, sweet sur-
prise,
The taper it set a-burning
The love-light brimming my lady's
eyes,
And my heart with the fire of
yearning.

THE CHASE

THE wind told the little leaves to
hurry,
And chased them down the way,
While the mother tree laughed
loud in glee,
For she thought her babes at
play.

The cruel wind and the rain
laughed loudly,
We'll bury them deep, they said,
And the old tree grieves, and the
little leaves
Lie low, all chilled and dead.

SUPPOSE

IF 'twere fair to suppose
That your heart were not taken,
That the dew from the rose
Petals still were not shaken,
I should pluck you,
Howe'er you should thorn me
and scorn me,
And wear you for life as the green
of the bower.

If 'twere fair to suppose
That that road was for va-
grants,
That the wind and the rose,
Counted all in their fragrance;
Oh, my dear one,
By love, I should take you and
make you,
The green of my life from the
scintillant hour.

THE DEATH OF THE FIRST BORN

COVER him over with daisies white
And eke with the poppies red,
Sit with me here by his couch to-
night,

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

For the First-Born, Love, is
dead.

Poor little fellow, he seemed so
fair

As he lay in my jealous arms;
Silent and cold he is lying there
Stripped of his darling charms.

Lusty and strong he had grown
forsooth,

Sweet with an infinite grace,
Proud in the force of his conquer-
ing youth,
Laughter alight in his face.

Oh, but the blast, it was cruel and
keen,

And ah, but the chill it was rare;
The look of the winter-kissed
flow'r you've seen

When meadows and fields were
bare.

Can you not wake from this white,
cold sleep

And speak to me once again?
True that your slumber is deep,
so deep,
But deeper by far is my pain.

Cover him over with daisies white,
And eke with the poppies red,
Sit with me here by his couch to-
night,

For the First-Born, Love, is
dead.

BEIN' BACK HOME

HOME agin, an' home to stay —
Yes, it's nice to be away.

Plenty things to do an' see,
But the old place seems to me
Jest about the proper thing.
Mebbe 'ts 'cause the mem'ries
cling

Closer 'round yore place o' birth
'N ary other spot on earth.

W'y it's nice jest settin' here,
Lookin' out an' seein' clear,
'Thout no smoke, ner dust, ner
haze

In these sweet October days.
What's as good as that there lane,
Kind o' browned from last night's
rain?

'Pears like home has got the start
When the goal's a feller's heart.

What's as good as that there jay
Screechin' up'ards towards the
gray

Skies? An' tell me, what's as fine
As that full-leafed pumpkin vine?
'Tow'rin' buidlin's — yes, they're
good;

But in sight o' field and wood,
Then a feller understand's
'Bout the house not made with
han's.

Let the others rant an' roam
When they git away from home;
Jest gi' me my old settie

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

An' my pipe beneath a tree;
Sight o' medders green an' still,
Now and then a gentle hill,
Apple orchards, full o' fruit,
Nigh a cider press to boot —

That's the thing jest done up
brown;

D'want to be too nigh to town;
Want to have the smells an' sights,
An' the dreams o' long still nights,
With the friends you used to know
In the keerless long ago —
Same old cronies, same old folks,
Same old cider, same old jokes.

Say, it's nice a-gittin' back,
When yore pulse is growin' slack,
An' yore breath begins to wheeze
Like a fair-set valley breeze;
Kind o' nice to set aroun'
On the old familiar groun',
Knowin' that when Death does
come,
That he'll find you right at home.

THE OLD CABIN

In de dead of night I sometimes,
Git to t'inkin' of de pas'
An' de days w'en slavery helt me
In my mis'ry — ha'd an' fas'.
Dough de time was mighty tryin',
In dese houahs somehow hit
seem

Dat a brightah light come slippin'
Thoo de kivahs of my dream.

An' my min' fu'gits de whuppins
Drap de feah o' block an' lash
An' flies straight to somep'n' joy-
ful

In a secon's lightnin' flash.
Den hit seems I see a vision
Of a dearah long ago
Of de childern tumblin' roun' me
By my rough ol' cabin do'.

Talk about yo' go'geous mansions
An' yo' big house great an'
gran',
Des bring up de fines' palace
Dat you know in all de lan'.
But dey's somep'n' dearah to me,
Somep'n' faihah to my eyes
In dat cabin, less you bring me
To yo' mansion in de skies.

I kin see de light a-shinin'
Thoo de chinks atween de logs,
I kin hyeah de way-off bayin'
Of my mastah's huntin' dogs,
An' de neighin' of de hosses
Stampin' on de ol' bahn flo',
But above dese soun's de laughin'
At my deah ol' cabin do'.

We would gethah daih at evenin',
All my frien's 'ud come erroun'
An' hit wan't no time, twell, bless
you,
You could hyeah de banjo's
soun'.

You could see de dahkies dancin'
Pigeon wing an' heel an' toe —

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Joyous times I tell you people
Roun' dat same ol' cabin do'.

But at times my t'oughts gits sad-
dah,

Ez I riccolec' de folks,
An' dey frolickin' an' talkin'
Wid dey laughin' an' dey jokes.
An' hit hu'ts me w'en I membahs
Dat I'll nevah see no mo'
Dem ah faces gethered smilin'
Roun' dat po' ol' cabin do'.

DESPAIR

LET me close the eyes of my soul
That I may not see
What stands between thee and me.

Let me shut the ears of my heart
That I may not hear
A voice that drowns yours, my
dear.

Let me cut the cords of my life,
Of my desolate being,
Since cursed is my hearing and see-
ing.

CIRCUMSTANCES ALTER CASES

TIM Murphy's gon' walkin' wid
Maggie O'Neill,
O chone!

If I was her muther, I'd frown
on sich foolin',
O chone!

I'm sure it's unmutherlike, darin'
an' wrong

To let a gyrul hear tell the sass an'
the song

Of every young felly that happens
along,
O chone!

An' Murphy, the things that's
be'n sed of his doin',
O chone!

'Tis a cud that no dacent folks
wants to be chewin',
O chone!

If he came to my door wid his
cane on a twirl,

Fur to thry to make love to you,
Biddy, my girl,

Ah, wouldn't I send him away
wid a whirl,
O chone!

They say the gossoon is indecent
and dirty,
O chone!

In spite of his dressin' so.
O chone!

Let him dress up ez foine ez a
king or a queen,

Let him put on more wrinkles
than ever was seen,

You'll be sure he's no match for
my little colleen,
O chone!

Faith the two is comin' back an'
their walk is all over,
O chone!

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

'Twas a pretty short walk fur to
take wid a lover,

O chone!

Why, I believe that Tim Mur-
phy's a kumin' this way,

Ah, Biddy jest look at him steppin'
so gay,

I'd niver belave what the gos-
sipers say,

O chone!

He's turned in the gate an' he's
coming a-caperin',

O chone!

Go, Biddy, go quick an' put on a
clane aporn,

O chone!

Be quick as ye kin fur he's right at
the dure;

Come in, master Tim, fur ye're
welcome I'm shure.

We were talkin' o' ye jest a minute
before.

O chone!

TILL THE WIND GETS RIGHT

OH the breeze is blowin' balmy

An the sun is in a haze;

There's a cloud jest givin' coolness
To the laziest of days.

There are crowds upon the lake-
side,

But the fish refuse to bite,

So I'll wait and go a-fishin'

When the wind gets right.

Now my boat tugs at her anchor,

Eager now to kiss the spray,

While the little waves are callin'

Drowsy sailor come away,

There's a harbor for the happy,

And its sheen is just in sight,

But I won't set sail to get there,

Till the wind gets right.

That's my trouble, too, I reckon,

I've been waitin' all too long,

Tho' the days were always

Still the wind is always wrong.

An' when Gabriel blows his trum-
pet,

In the day o' in the night,

I will still be found waitin',

Till the wind gets right.

A SUMMER NIGHT

SUMMAH is de lovin' time —

Do' keer what you say.

Night is allus peart an' prime,

Bettah dan de day.

Do de day is sweet an' good,

Birds a-singin' fine,

Pines a-smellin' in de wood,—

But de night is mine.

Rivah whisperin' "howdy do,"

Ez it pass you by —

Moon a-lookin' down at you,

Winkin' on de sly.

Frogs a-croakin' f'om de pon',

Singin' bass dey fill,

An' you listen way beyon'

Ol' man whippo'will.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Hush up, honey, tek my han',
Mek yo' footsteps light;
Somep'n' kin' o' hol's de lan'
On a summah night.
Somep'n' dat you nevah sees
An' you nevah hyeahs,
But you feels it in de breeze,
Somep'n' nigh to teahs.

Somep'n' nigh to teahs? dat's so;
But hit's nigh to smiles.
An' you feels it ez you go
Down de shinin' miles.
Tek my han', my little dove;
Hush an' come erway —
Summah is de time fu' love,
Night-time beats de day!

AT SUNSET TIME

ADOWN the west a golden glow
Sinks burning in the sea,
And all the dreams of long ago
Come flooding back to me.
The past has writ a story strange
Upon my aching heart,
But time has wrought a subtle
change,
My wounds have ceased to
smart.

No more the quick delight of
youth,
No more the sudden pain,
I look no more for trust or truth
Where greed may compass gain.

What, was it I who bared my
heart
Through unrelenting years,
And knew the sting of misery's
dart,
The tang of sorrow's tears?

'Tis better now, I do not weep,
I do not laugh nor care;
My soul and spirit half asleep
Drift aimless everywhere.
We float upon a sluggish stream,
We ride no rapids mad,
While life is all a tempered dream
And every joy half sad.

NIGHT

SILENCE, and whirling worlds afar
Through all encircling skies.
What floods come o'er the spirit's
bar,
What wondrous thoughts arise.

The earth, a mantle falls away,
And, winged, we leave the sod;
Where shines in its eternal sway
The majesty of God.

AT LOAFING-HOLT

SINCE I left the city's heat
For this sylvan, cool retreat,
High upon the hill-side here
Where the air is clean and clear,
I have lost the urban ways.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

Mine are calm and tranquil days,
Sloping lawns of green are mine,
Clustered treasures of the vine;
Long forgotten plants I know,
Where the best wild berries grow,
Where the greens and grasses
sprout,

When the elders blossom out.
Now I am grown weather-wise
With the lore of winds and skies.
Mine the song whose soft refrain
Is the sigh of summer rain.

Seek you where the woods are cool,
Would you know the shady pool
Where, throughout the lazy day,
Speckled beauties drowse or play?
Would you find in rest or peace
Sorrow's permanent release? —
Leave the city, grim and gray,
Come with me, ah, come away.
Do you fear the winter chill,
Deep's of snow upon the hill?
'Tis a mantle, kind and warm,
Shielding tender shoots from harm.
Do you dread the ice-clad
streams,—

They are mirrors for your dreams.
Here's a rouse, when summer's
past

To the raging winter's blast.
Let him roar and let him rout,
We are armored for the bout.
How the logs are glowing, see!
Who sings louder, they or he?
Could the city be more gay?
Burn your bridges! Come away!

WHEN A FELLER'S ITCHIN' TO BE SPANKED

W'EN us fellers stomp around,
makin' lots o' noise,
Gramma says, "There's certain
times come to little boys
W'en they need a shingle or the
soft side of a plank;"
She says "we're a-itchin' for a
right good spank."

An' she says, "Now thes you
wait,
It's a-comin'— soon or late,
W'en a feller's itchin' fer a spank."

W'en a feller's out o' school, you
know how he feels,
Gramma says we wriggle 'roun'
like a lot o' eels.

W'y it's like a man that's thes
home from out o' jail.
What's the use o' scoldin' if we
pull Tray's tail?

Gramma says, tho', "Thes you
wait,
It's a-comin'— soon or late,
You'se the boys that's itchin' to
be spanked."

Cats is funny creatures an' I like
to make 'em yowl,
Gramma alwus looks at me with
a awful scowl
An' she says, "Young gentlemen,
mamma should be thanked
Ef you'd get your knickerbockers
right well spanked."

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

An' she says, "Now thes you wait,
It's a-comin'—soon or late,"
W'en a feller's itchin' to be spanked.
Ef you fin' the days is gettin'
awful hot in school
An' you know a swimmin' place
where it's nice and cool,
Er you know a cat-fish hole brim-
min' full o' fish,
Whose a-goin' to set around school
and wish?
'Tain't no use to hide your bait,
It's a-comin,—soon or late,
W'en a feller's itchin' to be spanked.
Ol' folks know most ever'thing
'bout the world, I guess,
Gramma does, we wish she knowed
thes a little less,
But I alwus kind o' think it 'ud be
as well
Ef they wouldn't alwus have to
up an' tell;
We kids wish 'at they'd thes
wait,
It's a-comin'—soon or late,
W'en a feller's itchin' to be spanked.

THE RIVER OF RUIN

ALONG by the river of ruin
They dally — the thoughtless ones,
They dance and they dream

By the side of the stream,
As long as the river runs.
It seems all so pleasant and
cheery —
No thought of the morrow is
theirs,
And their faces are bright
With the sun of delight,
And they dream of no night-
brooding cares.
The women wear garlanded
tresses,
The men have rings on their
hands,
And they sing in their glee,
For they think they are free —
They that know not the treacher-
ous sands.
Ah, but this be a venturesome jour-
ney,
Forever those sands are ashift,
And a step to one side
Means a grasp of the tide,
And the current is fearful and
swift.
For once in the river of ruin,
What boots it, to do or to dare,
For down we must go
In the turbulent flow,
To the desolate sea of Despair.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

TO HER

YOUR presence like a benison to
me

Wakes my sick soul to dreamful
ecstasy,

I fancy that some old Arabian
night

Saw you my houri and my heart's
delight.

And wandering forth beneath the
passionate moon,

Your love-strung zither and my
soul in tune,

We knew the joy, the haunting of
the pain

That like a flame thrills
through me now again.

To-night we sit where sweet the
spice winds blow,

A wind the northland lacks and
ne'er shall know,

With clasped hands and spirits all
aglow

As in Arabia in the long ago.

A LOVE LETTER

OH, I des received a letter f'om de
sweetest little gal;

Oh, my; oh, my.

She's my lovely little sweetheart
an' her name is Sal:

Oh, my; oh, my.

She writes me dat she loves me an'
she loves me true,

She wonders ef I'll tell huh dat

I loves huh, too;

An' my heaht's so full o' music dat

I do' know what to do;

Oh, my; oh, my.

I got a man to read it an' he read
it fine;

Oh, my; oh, my.

Dey ain' no use denying dat her
love is mine;

Oh, my; oh, my.

But hyeah's de t'ing dat's puttin'
me in such a awful plight,

I t'ink of huh at mornin' an' I
dream of huh at night;

But how's I gwine to cou't huh
w'en I do' know how to
write?

Oh, my; oh, my.

My heaht is bubblin' ovah wid de
t'ings I want to say;

Oh, my; oh, my.

An' dey's lots of folks to copy
what I tell 'em fu' de pay;

Oh, my; oh, my.

But dey's t'ings dat I's a^lt'inkin'
dat is only fu' huh ears,

An' I couldn't lu'n to write 'em ef
I took a dozen years;

So to go down daih an' tell huh
is de only way, it 'pears;

Oh, my; oh, my.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

AFTER MANY DAYS

I'VE always been a faithful man
An' tried to live for duty,
But the stringent mode of life
Has somewhat lost its beauty.

The story of the generous bread
He sent upon the waters,
Which after many days returns
To trusting sons and daughters,

Had oft impressed me, so I want
My soul influenced by it,
And bought a loaf of bread and
sought
A stream where I could try it.

I cast my bread upon the waves
And fancied then to await it;
It had not floated far away
When a fish came up and ate it.

And if I want both fish and bread,
And surely both I'm wanting,
About the only way I see
Is for me to go fishing.

LIZA MAY

Little brown face full of smiles,
And a baby's guileless wiles,
Liza May, Liza May.

Eyes a-peeping thro' the fence
With an interest intense,
Liza May.

Ah, the gate is just ajar,
And the meadow is not far,
Liza May, Liza May.

And the road feels very sweet,
To your little toddling feet,
Liza May.

Ah, you roguish runaway,
What will toiling mother say,
Liza May, Liza May?

What care you who smile to greet
Everyone you chance to meet,
Liza May?

Soft the mill-race sings its song,
Just a little way along,
Liza May, Liza May.

But the song is full of guile,
Turn, ah turn, your steps the
while,
Liza May.

You have caught the gleam and
glow
Where the darkling waters flow,
Liza May, Liza May.

Flash of ripple, bend of bough,
Where are all the angels now?
Liza May.

Now a mother's eyes intense
Gazing o'er a shabby fence,
Liza May, Liza May.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

Then a mother's anguished face
Peering all around the place,
Liza May.

Hear the agonizing call
For a mother's all in all,
Liza May, Liza May.

Hear a mother's maddened prayer
To the calm unanswering air,
Liza May.

What's become of — Liza May?
What has darkened all the day?
Liza May, Liza May.

Ask the waters dark and fleet,
If they know the smiling, sweet
Liza May.

Call her, call her as you will,
On the meadow, on the hill,
Liza May, Liza May.

Through the brush or beaten track
Echo only gives you back,
Liza May.

Ah, but you were loving — sweet,
On your little toddling feet,
Liza May, Liza May.

But through all the coming years,
Must a mother breathe with tears,
Liza May.

THE MASTERS

Oh, who is the Lord of the land of
life,

When hotly goes the fray?
When, fierce we smile in the midst
of strife
Then whom shall we obey?

Oh, Love is the Lord of the land
of life

Who holds a monarch's sway;
He wends with wish of maid and
wife,
And him you must obey.

Then who is the Lord of the land
of life,

At setting of the sun?
Whose word shall sway when
Peace is rife
And all the fray is done?

Then Death is the Lord of the
land of life,

When your hot race is run.
Meet then his scythe and pruning-
knife

When the fray is lost or won.

TROUBLE IN DE KITCHEN

DEY was oncet a awful quoil
'twixt de skillet an' de pot;
De pot was des a-bilin' an' de skil-
let sho' was hot.

Dey slurred each othah's colah an'
dey called each othah names,

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

W'ile de coal-oil can dës gu-gled,
po'in oil erpon de flames.

De pot, hit called de skillet des a
flat, disfiggered t'ing,
An' de skillet 'plied dat all de pot
could do was set an' sing,
An' he 'lowed dat dey was 'lusions
dat he wouldn't stoop to mek
'Case he reckernize his juty, an' he
had too much at steak.

Well, at dis de pot biled ovah, case
his tempah gittin' highah,
An' de skillet got to sputterin',
den de fat was in de fiah.
Mistah fiah lay daih smokin' an'
a-t'inkin' to hisse'f,
W'ile de peppah-box us nudgin' of
de gingah on de she'f.

Den dey all des lef' hit to 'im,
'bout de trouble an' de talk;
An' howevah he decided, w'y dey
bofe 'u'd walk de chalk;
But de fiah uz so 'sgusted how dey
quoil an' dey shout
Dat he cooled 'em off, I reckon,
w'en he puffed an' des went
out.

CHRISTMAS

STEP wid de banjo an' glide wid
de fiddle,
Dis ain' no time fu' to pottah
an' piddle;

Fu' Christmas is comin', it's right
on de way,
An' dey's houahs to dance 'fo'
de break o' de day.

What if de win' is taihin' an'
whistlin'?

Look at dat fiah how hit's
spittin' an' bristlin'!

Heat in de ashes an' heat in de
cindahs,

Ol' mistah Fros' kin des look
thoo de windahs.

Heat up de toddy an' pas' de wa'm
glasses,

Don' stop to shivah at blowin's
an' blas'es,

Keep on de kittle an' keep it a-
hummin',

Eat all an' drink all, dey's lots
mo' a-comin'.

Look hyeah, Maria, don't open
dat oven,

Want all dese people a-pushin'
an' shovin'?

Res' f'om de dance? Yes, you
done cotch dat odah,

Mammy done cotch it, an' law!
hit nigh flo'd huh;

'Possum is monst'ous fu' mekin'
folks fin' it!

Come, draw yo' cheers up, I's
sho' I do' min' it.

Eat up dem critters, you men folks
an' wimmens,

'Possums ain' skace w'en dey's
lots o' pu'simmons.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

ROSES AND PEARLS

YOUR spoken words are roses fine
and sweet,
The songs you sing are perfect
pearls of sound.
How lavish nature is about your
feet,
To scatter flowers and jewels both
around.

Blushing the stream of petal beauty
flows,
Softly the white strings trickle
down and shine.
Oh! speak to me, my love, I crave
a rose.
Sing me a song, for I would pearls
were mine.

RAIN-SONGS

THE rain streams down like harp-
strings from the sky;
The wind, that world-old
harpist sitteth by;
And ever as he sings his low re-
frain,
He plays upon the harp-strings
of the rain.

A LOST DREAM

AH, I have changed, I do not
know
Why lonely hours affect me so.

In days of yore, this were not wont,
No loneliness my soul could daunt.

For me too serious for my age,
The weighty tome of hoary sage,
Until with puzzled heart astir,
One God-giv'n night, I dreamed
of her.

I loved no woman, hardly knew
More of the sex that strong men
woo
Than cloistered monk within his
cell;
But now the dream is lost, and hell
Holds me her captive tight and
fast
Who prays and struggles for the
past.
No living maid has charmed my
eyes,
But now, my soul is wonder-wise.

For I have dreamed of her and
seen
Her red-brown tresses' ruddy
sheen,
Have known her sweetness, lip to
lip,
The joy of her companionship.

When days were bleak and winds
were rude,
She shared my smiling solitude,
And all the bare hills walked with
me
To hearken winter's melody.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

And when the spring came o'er the
land

We fared together hand in hand
Beneath the linden's leafy screen
That waved above us faintly
green.

In summer, by the river-side,
Our souls were kindred with the
tide

That floated onward to the sea
As we swept toward Eternity.

The bird's call and the water's
drone
Were all for us and us alone.
The water-fall that sang all night
Was her companion, my delight,

And e'en the squirrel, as he sped
Along the branches overhead,
Half kindly and half envious,
Would chatter at the joy of us.

'Twas but a dream, her face, her
hair,

The spring-time sweet, the winter
bare,

The summer when the woods we
ranged,—

'Twas but a dream, but all is
changed.

Yes, all is changed and all has
fled,

The dream is broken, shattered,
dead.

And yet, sometimes, I pray to know
How just a dream could hold me
so.

A SONG

THOU art the soul of a summer's
day,

Thou art the breath of the rose.

But the summer is fled

And the rose is dead

Where are they gone, who knows,
who knows?

Thou art the blood of my heart o'
hearts,

Thou art my soul's repose,

But my heart grows numb

And my soul is dumb

Where art thou, love, who knows,
who knows?

Thou art the hope of my after
years—

Sun for my winter snows

But the years go by

'Neath a clouded sky.

Where shall we meet, who knows,
who knows?

MISCELLANEOUS

THE CAPTURE

DUCK come switchin' 'cross de lot

Hi, oh, Miss Lady!

Hurry up an' hide de pot

Hi, oh, Miss Lady!

Duck's a mighty 'spicious fowl,

Slick as snake an' wise as owl;

Hol' dat dog, don't let him yowl!

Hi, oh, Miss Lady!

Th'ow dat co'n out kind o' slow

Hi, oh, Miss Lady!

Keep yo'se'f behin' de do'

Hi, oh, Miss Lady!

Lots o' food'll kill his feah,

Co'n is cheap but fowls is deah —

"Come, good ducky, come on
heah."

Hi, oh, Miss Lady!

Ain't he fat and ain't he fine,

Hi, oh, Miss Lady!

Des can't wait to make him
mine.

Hi, oh, Miss Lady!

See him waddle when he walk,

'Sh! keep still and don't you talk!

Got you! Don't you daih to
squawk!

Hi, oh, Miss Lady!

WHEN WINTER DARKEN- ING ALL AROUND

WHEN winter covering all the
ground

Hides every sign of Spring, sir.

However you may look around,

Pray what will then you sing,
sir?

The Spring was here last year I
know,

And many bards did flute, sir;

I shall not fear a little snow

Forbid me from my lute, sir.

If words grow dull and rhymes
grow rare,

I'll sing of Spring's farewell, sir.

For every season steals an air,

Which has a Springtime smell,
sir.

But if upon the other side,

With passionate longing burn-
ing,

Will seek the half unjeweled tide,

And sing of Spring's returning.

FROM THE PORCH AT RUNNYMEDE

I STAND above the city's rush and
din,

And gaze far down with calm
and undimmed eyes,

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

To where the misty smoke wreath
 grey and dim
Above the myriad roofs and
 spires rise;

Still is my heart and vacant is my
 breath —

 This lovely view is breath and
 life to me,

Why I could charm the icy soul
 of death

 With such a sight as this I stand
 and see.

I hear no sound of labor's din or
 stir,

 I feel no weight of worldly
 cares or fears,

Sweet song of birds, of wings the
 soothing whirr,

 These sounds alone assail my
 listening ears.

Unwhipt of conscience here I
 stand alone,

 The breezes humbly kiss my gar-
 ment's hem;

I am a king — the whole world is
 my throne,

 The blue grey sky my royal
 diadem.

Such chances, such abilities,
 To see the end was not for my
 poor eyes,
Thine was the impulse, thine the
 forming thought.

Ah, I have wrought,
 And these sad hands have right
 to tell their story,

It was no hard up striving after
 glory,

 Catching and losing, gaining
 and failing,

Raging me back at the world's
 raucous railing.

 Simply and humbly from stone
 and from wood,

Wrought I the things that to thee
 might seem good.

If they are little, ah God! but the
 cost,

 Who but thou knowest the all
 that is lost!

If they are few, is the workman-
 ship true?

Try them and weigh me, what-
 e'er be my due!

EVENING

EQUIPMENT

WITH what thou gavest me, O
 Master,
I have wrought.

THE moon begins her stately ride
 Across the summer sky;
The happy wavelets lash the
 shore,—
The tide is rising high.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Beneath some friendly blade of
grass

The lazy beetle cowers;
The coffers of the air are filled
With offerings from the flow-
ers.

And slowly buzzing o'er my head
A swallow wings her flight;
I hear the weary plowman sing
As falls the restful night.

TO PFRIMMER

(Lines on reading "Driftwood.")

DRIFTWOOD gathered here and
there

Along the beach of time;
Now and then a chip of truth
'Mid boards and boughs of rhyme;
Driftwood gathered day by day,—
The cypress and the oak,—
Twigs that in some former time
From sturdy home trees broke.
Did this wood come floating thick
All along down "Injin Crik?"
Or did kind tides bring it thee
From the past's receding sea
Down the stream of memory?

TO THE MIAMI

KISS me, Miami, thou most con-
stant one!

I love thee more for that thou
changest not.

When Winter comes with frigid
blast,

Or when the blithesome Spring
is past

And Summer's here with sun-
shine hot,

Or in sere Autumn, thou has
still the pow'r

To charm alike, whate'er the hour.

Kiss me, Miami, with thy dewy
lips;

Throbs fast my heart e'en as
thine own breast beats.

My soul doth rise as rise thy
waves,

As each on each the dark shore
laves

And breaks in ripples and re-
treats.

There is a poem in thine every
phase;

Thou still has sung through all
thy days.

Tell me, Miami, how it was with
thee

When years ago Tecumseh in
his prime

His birch boat o'er thy waters
sent,

And pitched upon thy banks his
tent.

In that long-gone, poetic time,
Did some bronze bard thy flowing
stream sit by

And sing thy praises, e'en as I?

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

Did some bronze lover 'neath this
dark old tree

Whisper of love unto his Indian
maid?

And didst thou list his murmurs
deep,

And in thy bosom safely keep

The many raging vows they
said?

Or didst thou tell to fish and frog
and bird

The raptured scenes that there
occurred?

But, O dear stream, what volumes
thou couldst tell

To all who know thy language
as I do,

Of life and love and jealous hate!

But now to tattle were too late,—

Thou who hast ever been so
true.

Tell not to every passing idler
here

All those sweet tales that reached
thine ear.

But, silent stream, speak out and
tell me this:

I say that men and things are
still the same;

Were men as bold to do and dare?

Were women then as true and
fair?

Did poets seek celestial flame,
The hero die to gain a laureled
brow,

And women suffer, then as now?

CHRISTMAS CAROL

RING out, ye bells!

All Nature swells

With gladness at the wondrous
story,—

The world was lorn,

But Christ is born

To change our sadness into glory.

Sing, earthlings, sing!

To-night a King

Hath come from heaven's high
throne to bless us.

The outstretched hand

O'er all the land

Is raised in pity to caress us.

Come at his call;

Be joyful all;

Away with mourning and with
sadness!

The heavenly choir

With holy fire

Their voices raise in songs of glad-
ness.

The darkness breaks

And Dawn awakes,

Her cheeks suffused with youthful
blushes.

The rocks and stones

In holy tones

Are singing sweeter than the
thrushes.

Then why should we

In silence be,

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

When Nature lends her voice to
praises;
When heaven and earth
Proclaim the truth
Of Him for whom that lone star
blazes?

No, be not still,
But with a will
Strike all your harps and set them
ringing;
On hill and heath
Let every breath
Throw all its power into singing!

A SUMMER PASTORAL

It's hot to-day. The bees is
buzzin'

Kinder don't-keer-like aroun'
An' fur off the warm air dances
O'er the parchin' roofs in town.
In the brook the cows is standin';
Childern hidin' in the hay;
Can't keep none of 'em a workin',
'Cause it's hot to-day.

It's hot to-day. The sun is
blazin'

Like a great big ball o' fire;
Seems as ef instead o' settin'
It keeps mountin' higher an'
higher.
I'm as triflin' as the children,
Though I blame them lots an'
scold;
I keep slippin' to the spring-house,
Where the milk is rich an' cold.

The very air within its shadder
Smells o' cool an' restful things,
An' a roguish little robin
Sits above the place an' sings.
I don't mean to be a shirkin',
But I linger by the way
Longer, mebbe, than is needful,
'Cause it's hot to-day.

It's hot to-day. The horses stum-
ble

Half asleep across the fiel's;
An' a host o' teasin' fancies '
O'er my burnin' senses steals,—
Dreams o' cool rooms, curtains
lowered,
An' a sofy's temptin' look;
Patter o' composin' raindrops
Or the ripple of a brook.

I strike a stump! That wakes
me sudden;

Dreams all vanish into air.
Lordy! how I chew my whiskers;
'Twouldn't do fur me to swear.
But I have to be so keerful
'Bout my thoughts an' what I
say;

Somethin' might slip out unheeded,
'Cause it's hot to-day.

Git up, there, Suke! you, Sal, git
over!

Sakes alive! how I do sweat.
Every stitch that I've got on me,
Bet a cent, is wringin' wet.
If this keeps up, I'll lose my tem-
per.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

Gee there, Sal, you lazy brute!
Wonder who on airth this weather
Could 'a' be'n got up to suit?

You, Sam, go bring a tin o' water;
Dash it all, don't be so slow!
'Pears as ef you tuk an hour
'Tween each step to stop an'
blow.

Think I want to stand a meltin'
Out here in this b'ilin' sun,
While you stop to think about it?
Lift them feet o' your'n an' run.

It ain't no use; I'm plumb fe-
taggled.

Come an' put this team away.
I won't plow another furrer;
It's too mortal hot to-day.
I ain't weak, nor I ain't lazy,
But I'll stand this half day's loss
'Fore I let the devil make me
Lose my patience an' git cross.

IN SUMMER TIME

WHEN summer time has come,
and all
The world is in the magic thrall
Of perfumed airs that lull each
sense
To fits of drowsy indolence;
When skies are deepest blue above,
And flow'rs aflush,—then most I
love
To start, while early dewes are
damp,

And wend my way in woodland
tramp

Where forests rustle, tree on tree,
And sing their silent songs to me;
Where pathways meet and path
ways part,—

To walk with Nature heart by
heart,

Till wearied out at last I lie
Where some sweet stream steals
singing by

A mossy bank; where violets vie
In color with the summer sky,—
Or take my rod and line and hook,
And wander to some darkling
brook,

Where all day long the willows
dream,

And idly droop to kiss the stream,
And there to loll from morn till
night—

Unheeding nibble, run, or bite—
Just for the joy of being there
And drinking in the summer air,
The summer sounds, and summer
sights,

That set a restless mind to rights
When grief and pain and raging
doubt

Of men and creeds have worn it
out;

The birds' song and the water's
drone,

The humming bees' low monotone,
The murmur of the passing breeze,
And all the sounds akin to these,
That make a man in summer time

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Feel only fit for rest and rhyme.
Joy springs all radiant in my
breast;

Though pauper poor, than king
more blest,

The tide beats in my soul so strong
That happiness breaks forth in
song,

And rings aloud the welkin blue
With all the songs I ever knew.
O time of rapture! time of song!
How swiftly glide thy days along
Adown the current of the years,
Above the rocks of grief and tears!
'Tis wealth enough of joy for me
In summer time to simply be.

A THANKSGIVING POEM

THE sun hath shed its kindly
light,

Our harvesting is gladly o'er
Our fields have felt no killing
blight,

Our bins are filled with goodly
store.

From pestilence, fire, flood, and
sword

We have been spared by thy de-
cree,

And now with humble hearts, O
Lord,

We come to pay our thanks to
thee.

We feel that had our merits been
The measure of thy gifts to us,

We erring children, born of sin,
Might not now be rejoicing
thus.

No deed of ours hath brought us
grace;

When thou were nigh our sight
was dull,

We hid in trembling from thy
face,

But thou, O God, wert merci-
ful.

Thy mighty hand o'er all the land
Hath still been open to bestow
Those blessings which our wants
demand

From heaven, whence all bless-
ings flow.

Thou hast, with ever watchful eye,
Looked down on us with holy
care,

And from thy storehouse in the
sky

Hast scattered plenty every-
where.

Then lift we up our songs of
praise

To thee, O Father, good and
kind;

To thee we consecrate our days;
Be thine the temple of each
mind.

With incense sweet our thanks
ascend;

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

Before thy works our powers
pall;
Though we should strive years
without end,
We could not thank thee for
them all.

NUTTING SONG

THE November sun invites me,
And although the chill wind smites
me,
I will wander to the woodland
Where the laden trees await;
And with loud and joyful singing
I will set the forest ringing,
As if I were king of Autumn,
And Dame Nature were my
mate,—

While the squirrel in his gambols
Fearless round about me ambles,
As if he were bent on showing
In my kingdom he'd a share;
While my warm blood leaps and
dashes,
And my eye with freedom flashes,
As my soul drinks deep and deeper
Of the magic in the air.

There's a pleasure found in nut-
ting,
All life's cares and griefs outshut-
ting,
That is fuller far and better
Than what prouder sports im-
part.

Who could help a carol trilling
As he sees the baskets filling?
Why, the flow of song keeps run-
ning
O'er the high walls of the heart.

So when I am home returning,
When the sun is lowly burning,
I will once more wake the echoes
With a happy song of praise,—
For the golden sunlight blessing,
And the breezes' soft caressing,
And the precious boon of living
In the sweet November days.

LOVE'S PICTURES

LIKE the blush upon the rose
When the wooing south wind
speaks,

Kissing soft its petals,
Are thy cheeks.

Tender, soft, beseeching, true,
Like the stars that deck the skies
Through the ether sparkling,
Are thine eyes.

Like the song of happy birds,
When the woods with spring re-
joice,
In their blithe awak'ning,
Is thy voice.

Like soft threads of clustered silk
O'er thy face so pure and fair,
Sweet in its profusion,
Is thy hair.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Like a fair but fragile vase,
Triumph of the carver's art,
Graceful formed and slender,—
Thus thou art.

Ah, thy cheek, thine eyes, thy
voice,
And thy hair's delightful wave
Make me, I'll confess it,
Thy poor slave!

THE OLD HOMESTEAD

'Tis an old deserted homestead
On the outskirts of the town,
Where the roof is all moss-covered,
And the walls are tumbling
down;
But around that little cottage
Do my brightest mem'ries cling,
For 'twas there I spent the moments
Of my youth,—life's happy
spring.

I remember how I used to
Swing upon the old front gate,
While the robin in the tree tops
Sung a night song to his mate;
And how later in the evening,
As the beaux were wont to do,
Mr. Perkins, in the parlor,
Sat and sparked my sister Sue.

There my mother — heaven bless
her! —

Kissed or spanked as was our
need,
And by smile or stroke implanted
In our hearts fair virtue's seed;
While my father, man of wisdom,
Lawyer keen, and farmer stout,
Argued long with neighbor Dob-
bins
How the corn crops would turn
out.

Then the quiltings and the
dances —

How my feet were wont to fly,
While the moon peeped through
the barn chinks
From her stately place on high.
Oh, those days, so sweet, so happy,
Ever backward o'er me roll;
Still the music of that farm life
Rings an echo in my soul.

Now the old place is deserted,
And the walls are falling down;
All who made the home life cheer-
ful,

Now have died or moved to
town.

But about that dear old cottage
Shall my mem'ries ever cling,
For 'twas there I spent the mo-
ments

Of my youth,—life's happy
spring.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

ON THE DEATH OF W. C.

THOU arrant robber, Death!
Couldst thou not find
Some lesser one than he
To rob of breath,—
Some poorer mind
Thy prey to be?

His mind was like the sky,—
As pure and free;
His heart was broad and open
As the sea.
His soul shone purely through his
face,
And Love made him her dwelling
place.

Not less the scholar than the
friend,
Not less a friend than man;
The manly life did shorter end
Because so broad it ran.

Weep not for him, unhappy Muse!
His merits found 'a grander use
Some other-where. God wisely
sees

The place that needs his qualities.
Weep not for him, for when Death
lowers

O'er youth's ambrosia-scented bow-
ers

He only plucks the choicest flow-
ers.

AN OLD MEMORY

How sweet the music sounded
That summer long ago,
When you were by my side, love,
To list its gentle flow.

I saw your eyes a-shining,
I felt your rippling hair,
I kissed your pearly cheek, love,
And had no thought of care.

And gay or sad the music,
With subtle charm replete;
I found in after years, love
'Twas you that made it sweet.

For standing where we heard it,
I hear again the strain;
It wakes my heart, but thrills it
With sad, mysterious pain.

It pulses not so joyous
As when you stood with me,
And hand in hand we listened
To that low melody.

Oh, could the years turn back,
love!

Oh, could events be changed
To what they were that time, love,
Before we were estranged;

Wert thou once more a maiden
Whose smile was gold to me;
Were I once more the lover
Whose word was life to thee,—

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

O God! could all be altered,
The pain, the grief, the strife,
And wert thou — as thou shouldst
be —

My true and loyal wife!

But all my tears are idle,
And all my wishes vain.
What once you were to me, love,
You may not be again.

For I, alas! like others,
Have missed my dearest aim.
I asked for love. Oh, mockery!
Fate comes to me with fame!

A CAREER

“BREAK me my bounds, and let
me fly
To regions vast of boundless sky;
Nor I, like piteous Daphne, be
Root-bound. Ah, no! I would
be free

As yon same bird that in its flight
Outstrips the range of mortal
sight;

Free as the mountain streams that
gush

From bubbling springs, and down-
ward rush

Across the serrate mountain's
side,—

The rocks o'erwhelmed, their
banks defied,—

And like the passions in the soul,
Swell into torrents as they roll.

Oh, circumscribe me not by rules
That serve to lead the minds of
fools!

But give me pow'r to work my
will,

And at my deeds the world shall
thrill.

My words shall rouse the slumb'ring
zest

That hardly stirs in manhood's
breast;

And as the sun feeds lesser lights,
As planets have their satellites,

So round about me will I bind
The men who prize a master
mind!”

He lived a silent life alone,
And laid him down when it was
done;

And at his head was placed a
stone

On which was carved a name un-
known!

ON THE RIVER

THE sun is low,
The waters flow,
My boat is dancing to and fro.
The eve is still,
Yet from the hill
The killdeer echoes loud and shrill.

The paddles plash,
The wavelets dash,
We see the summer lightning flash;

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

While now and then,
In marsh and fen
Too muddy for the feet of men,

Where neither bird
Nor beast has stirred,
The spotted bullfrog's croak is
heard.

The wind is high,
The grasses sigh,
The sluggish stream goes sobbing
by.

And far away
The dying day
Has cast its last effulgent ray;
While on the land
The shadows stand
Proclaiming that the eve's at hand.

POOR WITHERED ROSE

A Song

POOR withered rose, she gave it me,
Half in revenge and half in glee;
Its petals not so pink by half
As are her lips when curled 'to
laugh,
As are her cheeks when dimples
gay
In merry mischief o'er them play.

Chorus

Forgive, forgive, it seems un-
kind
To cast thy petals to the
wind;

But it is right, and lest I err
So scatter I all thought of her.

Poor withered rose, so like my
heart,
That wilts at sorrow's cruel dart.
Who hath not felt the winter's
blight
When every hope seemed warm
and bright?
Who doth not know love unre-
turned,
E'en when the heart most wildly
burned?

Poor withered rose, thou liest
dead;
Too soon thy beauty's bloom hath
fled.
'Tis not without a tearful ruth
I watch decay thy blushing routh;
And though thy life goes out in
dole,
Thy perfume lingers in my soul.

WORN OUT

You bid me hold my peace
And dry my fruitless tears,
Forgetting that I bear
A pain beyond my years.

You say that I should smile
And drive the gloom away;
I would, but sun and smiles
Have left my life's dark day.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

All time seems cold and void,
And naught but tears remain;
Life's music beats for me
A melancholy strain.

I used at first to hope,
But hope is past and gone;
And now without a ray
My cheerless life drags on.

Like to an ash-stained hearth
When all its fires are spent;
Like to an autumn wood
By storm winds rudely shent,—

So sadly goes my heart,
Unclothed of hope and peace;
It asks not joy again,
But only seeks release.

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

(From a Westerner's Point of
View.)

No matter what you call it,
Whether genius, or art,
He sings the simple songs that
come

The closest to your heart.
Fur trim an' skillful phrases,
I do not keer a jot;
'Tain't the words alone, but feel-
in's,

That tech the tender spot.
An' that's jest why I love him,—
Why, he's got sech human
feelin',

An' in ev'ry song he gives us,
You kin see it creepin', stealin',

Through the core the tears go
tricklin',
But the edge is bright an'
smiley;

I never saw a poet
Like that poet Whitcomb Riley.

His heart keeps beatin' time with
our'n

In measures fast or slow;
He tells us jest the same ol' things
Our souls have learned to know.

He paints our joys an' sorriers
In a way so stric'ly true,
That a body can't help knowin'
That he has felt them too.

If there's a lesson to be taught,
He never fears to teach it,
An' he puts the food so good an'
low

That the humblest one kin reach
it.

Now in our time, when poets
rhyme

For money, fun, or fashion,
'Tis good to hear one voice so clear
That thrills with honest passion.

So let the others build their songs,
An' strive to polish highly,—
There's none of them kin tech the
heart

Like our own Whitcomb Riley.

A MADRIGAL

DREAM days of fond delight and
hours

As rosy-hued as dawn, are mine,

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF

Love's drowsy wine,
Brewed from the heart of Passion
 flowers,
Flows softly o'er my lips
And save thee, all the world is
 in eclipse.

There were no light if thou wert
 not;
The sun would be too sad to
 shine,
And all the line
Of hours from dawn would be a
 blot;
And Night would haunt the
 skies,
An unlaid ghost with staring
 dark-ringed eyes.

Oh, love, if thou wert not my love,
And I perchance not thine —
 what then?
Could gift of men
Or favor of the God above,
Plant aught in this bare heart
Or teach this tongue the sing-
 er's soulful art?

Ah, no! 'Tis love, and love alone
That spurs my soul so surely on;
Turns night to dawn,
And thorns to roses fairest blown;
And winter drear to spring —
Oh, were it not for love I could
 not sing!

A STARRY NIGHT

A CLOUD fell down from the heav-
 ens,
And broke on the mountain's
 brow;
It scattered the dusky fragments
All over the vale below.

The moon and the stars were anx-
 ious
To know what its fate might be;
So they rushed to the azure op'n-
 ing,
And all peered down to see.

A LYRIC

My lady love lives far away,
And oh my heart is sad by day,
And ah my tears fall fast by night,
What may I do in such a plight.

Why, miles grow few when love is
 fleet,
And love, you know, hath flying
 feet;
Break off thy sighs and witness
 this,
How poor a thing mere distance is.

My love knows not I love her so,
And would she scorn me, did she
 know?

How may the tale I would impart
Attract her ear and storm her
 heart?

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Calm thou the tempest in my
breast,

Who loves in silence loves the
best,

But bide thy time, she will awake,
No night so dark but morn will
break.

But though my heart so strongly
yearn,

My lady loves me not in turn,
How may I win the blest reply
That my void heart shall satisfy.

Love breedeth love, be thou but
true,

And soon thy love shall love thee,
too;

If Fate hath meant you heart for
heart,

There's naught may keep you
twain apart.

HOW SHALL I WOO THEE

How shall I woo thee to win thee,
mine own?

Say in what tongue shall I tell
of my love.

I who was fearless so timid have
grown,

All that was eagle has turned
into dove.

The path from the meadow that
leads to the bars

Is more to me now than the path
of the stars.

How shall I woo thee to win thee,
mine own,

Thou who art fair and as far as
the moon?

Had I the strength of the torrent's
wild tone,

Had I the sweetness of warblers
in June;

The strength and the sweetness
might charm and persuade,

But neither have I my petition to
aid.

How shall I woo thee to win thee,
mine own?

How shall I traverse the dis-
tance between

My humble cot and your glorious
throne?

How shall a clown gain the ear
of a queen?

Oh teach me the tongue that shall
please thee the best,

For till I have won thee my heart
may not rest.

A fine will be charged for each day the book is kept overtime.

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